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RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
THE PUBLIC SQUARE
A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

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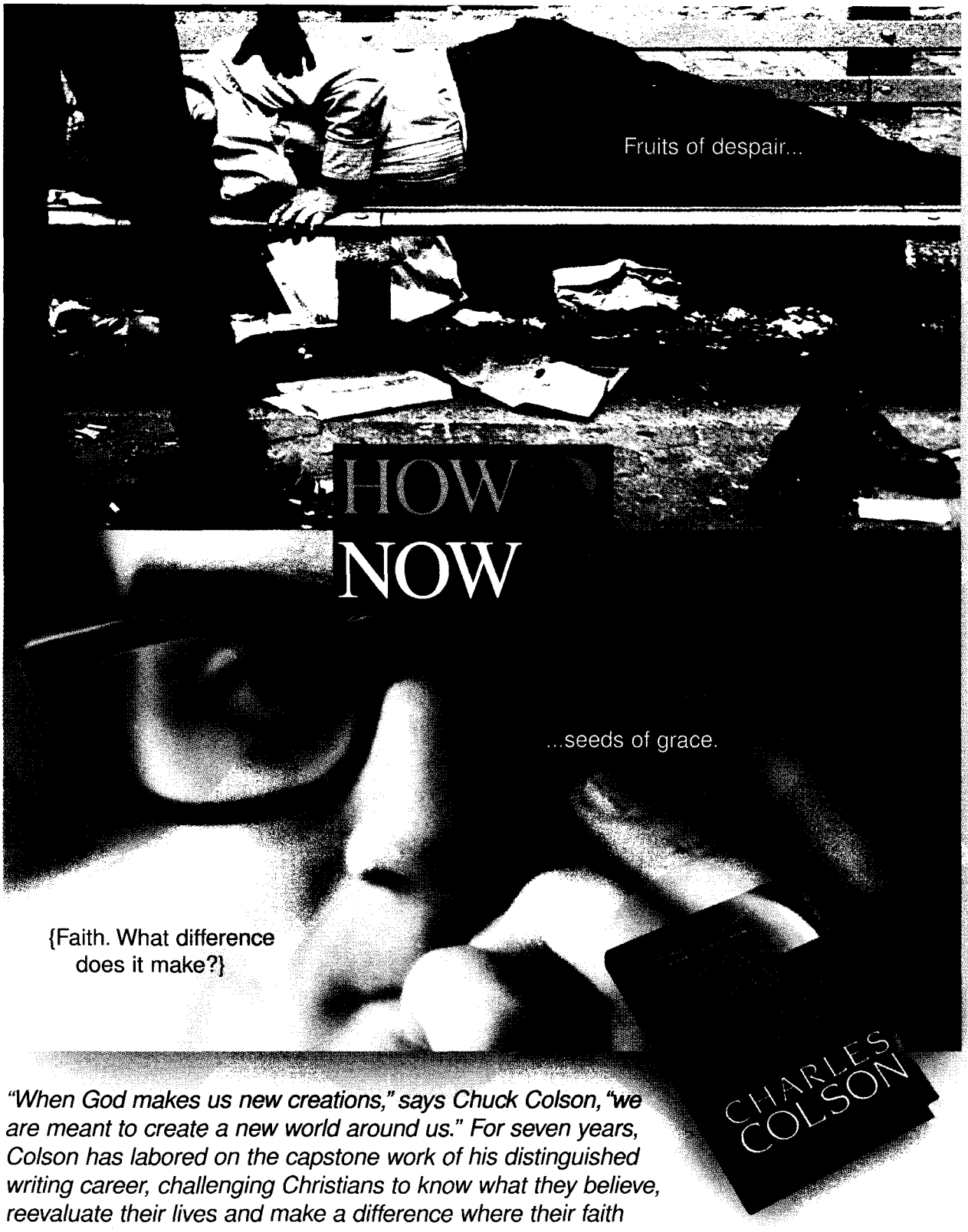

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Of Law and Morality

It is a profound service for Robert H. Bork in "Thomas More for Our Season" (June/July) to recognize a distinction between law and morality, and then retract that distinction out of fear of the disorder that would follow from "absorption with self." What makes Judge Bork's article so valuable is that it reveals the fundamental factor underlying the conservative positivist's rejection of natural law. On his analysis, when the judge or social critic appeals to a standard beyond the (positive) law, he is necessarily referring to mere "individual conscience," i.e., to "the urges of self." This constitutes surrender to the culture of the 1960s in which we fell victim to moral relativism and subsequent social and legal disorder.

Judge Bork's argument is sound only if the appeal beyond the positive law is restricted to the subjective and personal. But this is precisely the issue before us, not only in legal theory but in the culture wars generally: Is there an *objective* standard, knowable to man, in light of which human behavior, including the rulings of courts and the statutes of legislatures, may be judged? Individuals as disparate as C. S. Lewis and Abraham Lincoln (as well as contemporary commentators such as Hadley Arkes and Harry Jaffa) argue that there is. Conservative positivists such as Judge Bork, yielding to modernist skepticism, claim that there is not. For them any appeal to the transcendent in matters of law or policy is mere "individualism" that "produces the substitution of private morality for public law and duty."

When the chips are down, conservative positivists join the much more numerous and influential liberal and postmodern theorists who see in any appeal to higher things only whim, chaos, and a return to religious wars of conscience. Judge Bork is doubtless correct that many unwise and unjust rulings have come from jurists who shroud personal prejudice in the trappings of appeals to the higher things. But upon what authority can the positivist criticize these rulings of the courts and similarly grounded statutes issuing from the legislatures?

Jon M. Fennell
Naperville, Illinois

When I approached Robert H. Bork's article, I suspected he would have something to say about Martin Luther. He did. Unfortunately, he went to the well of skewed secondary sources to enlist a phantom Luther as a foil. A portion of the article pitted a Luther painted up as a moral anarchist being unmasked by "The Man for All Seasons."

Anyone familiar with Luther's writings knows that the Reformer detested lawlessness as much as he eschewed legalism. His harsh words against the civil disobedience of those who participated in the Peasants' Revolt are a testimony of Luther's paradoxical view of justification. He held that although we are not justified by works, the justified man works. Whenever Luther spoke against "laws" it was against human laws that he believed contradicted God's sacred laws revealed in Scripture, or that implied that in order to be saved one had to improve upon Christ's perfect salvific work.

(The Rev.) Peter M. Kurowski
St. Paul Lutheran Church
California, Maryland

As I understand his article, the one thing that Robert H. Bork most admires in Thomas More's character is his steadfast loyalty and adherence to "the law," *even when that law departed at times from what his moral conscience*

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taught him was right. And yet Judge Bork has frequently in the past, in this journal and elsewhere, lambasted the U.S. Supreme Court for judicial usurpation of legislative powers and for failing to reverse erroneous past decisions such as *Roe v. Wade* (1972) when it had a chance, as in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992). Other critics, if not Bork himself, have ridiculed Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony Kennedy, and David Souter for basing their decision to reaffirm *Roe* on adherence to past holdings—in other words, "the law"—and the doctrine of *stare decisis*, notwithstanding moral and legal reservations about the correctness of those holdings. How then—and this is the question I pose to Judge Bork—did these Justices act any less admirably than Thomas More?

Barton L. Ingraham
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Robert H. Bork tells us that "obedience to constituted authority" was the center of Thomas More's morality and suggests that such a worldview has great merit. Judge Bork's descriptive point about More's morality may be true, but his defense of More's philosophy is quite weak.

It seems safe to say that More would have condemned the American revolutionaries as traitors. We should not forget that many of the colonists remained loyal to England during the war. Indeed, many of the loyalists fled to Canada after the peace treaty was signed. If More had been on the scene, he probably would have wanted the British Army to crush the rebellion. And he likely would have approved the hanging of George Washington, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and other revolutionary leaders. Judge Bork does not grapple with the startling implications of More's worldview.

Judge Bork condemns jury nullification as a "pernicious practice," but again, he does not grapple seriously with the implications of his statement. At the time of the founding, the doctrine of jury nullification was considered part and parcel of what a jury trial was all about. To take just one example, John Adams said, "It is not only [the juror's] right, but his duty . . . to find the verdict according to his own best understanding, judgment, and conscience, though in direct opposition to the direction of the court." Juries were considered an important bulwark of liberty because they were not a part of the state's law enforcement apparatus. Judge Bork does not have to support jury nullification, but as a leading advocate of an "originalist" jurisprudence, he should explain why he parts company with the Founders on this issue.

Thomas More was a man who had the courage of his convictions. Courage is certainly an admirable trait, but it seems to me that one should be wary of More's zealous commitment to the notion of "obedience to constituted authority."

Timothy Lynch
Center for Constitutional Studies
Washington, D.C.

Robert H. Bork's "Thomas More for Our Season" brings clarity to Thomas More the man and to the complex relationships between religion and law. I entirely agree with his focus on the issues of law and morality and agree with him when he declares that More thought "morality was superior to both human law and the will of the sovereign." Given this prelude, I was amazed to read his subsequent discussion of Bill Clinton's clear mendacity and Augusto Pinochet's extradition for his well-documented crimes against humanity. For Judge Bork there is "no doubt" that Clinton obstructed justice and tampered with witnesses while at the same time Pinochet "allegedly" had murders committed. If this is how morality affects law, we're doomed. It would appear that morality for Judge Bork is a state of mind that shifts with the wind as advantage would have it. For Grenada and Pinochet, he offers the old and extremely lame excuse that these had some moral justification because they allegedly saved people from the evils of communism. What Judge Bork has forgotten (and what More didn't) is the difference between good and bad, and between important and irrelevant. This is what morality is all about.

Henry Schultz
Santa Clarita, California

I was extremely disappointed in Robert H. Bork's defense of Augusto Pinochet. Admittedly, the arrest of Pinochet could set some uncomfortable precedents for other world leaders (but how, when international law is barely law at all, remains a question). Even more readily admitted is the fact that communism was and still is "an assault upon the human soul." Judge Bork claims that Pinochet saved Chile from a "Marxist dictatorship and the despotism, horrors, and bloodshed all such regimes inevitably bring." Bork's dishonesty comes in not noting that these things happened in Chile not under Salvador Allende (the alleged Marxist dictator), but instead were unleashed by Pinochet himself.

Allende was elected in 1970 with 36 percent of the vote and later approved as president of Chile by the Chilean Congress, in which *Unidad Popular* (Allende's party) did not have a majority. From 1970 until the coup in 1973 that put Pinochet in power, a large part, if not the majority part, of the political, social, and economic instability in Chile under Allende was the result of United States involvement in Chilean politics on behalf of Allende's enemies. From 1962 to 1970, the Central Intelligence Agency spent $11 million to help prevent Allende from being elected. Between 1970 and 1973, the CIA spent another $8 million to "destabilize" the Chilean economy.

After the coup, the turmoil in Chile had a new source: the "savior,"

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Pinochet. His four-man junta abolished civil liberties, dissolved the national congress, banned unions, outlawed strikes and collective bargaining, and removed Allende's agrarian and economic reforms. The *Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional*, Chile's secret police, jailed (often in one of at least six concentration camps), tortured, and murdered thousands of Chileans, all under the guidance of Colonel Walter Rauff, a former Nazi who supervised the murder of Jews at Auschwitz. Pinochet remained the unelected dictator of Chile for nearly twenty years, inflicting on his country the very horrors Judge Bork congratulates him for having prevented, which is a bit of double-speak the most egregious moral relativist could be proud of. All in all, Pinochet's reign of terror in Chile was the antithesis of the rule of law (whether man's or God's law), and would surely prompt the extreme disapproval of not only Thomas More but also of any person truly concerned with justice and the limits of just government.

Mark L. Chance
Houston, Texas

Robert H. Bork replies:

Jon M. Fennell confuses the role of judges, on the one hand, and that of legislators and citizens, on the other. A judge is not supposed to be a maker of policy but an interpreter of the intentions of those with the authority to make policy, whether through statutes or the Constitution. We probably differ as to the sources and substance of natural law, but that law should guide legislators and the public, not courts. Natural law, in the sense that Mr. Fennell means, is as vulnerable to subjectivism as is other law. If pressed to think in those categories, Harry Blackmun and his colleagues would have insisted that *Roe v. Wade* expressed natural law. Mr. Fennell would hand judges yet another excuse to do as they wish.

The Reverend Peter M. Kurowski's insistence that Martin Luther was devoted to the rule of law fails to convince me. The "skewed secondary source" I used was a direct quote of Luther in Peter Ackroyd's biography of More. Luther there appears to be speaking of human law, which was to be ignored when it contradicted "God's sacred laws revealed in Scripture." In that respect, Luther did disagree with More, and I much prefer More's side of the argument.

Barton L. Ingraham to the contrary notwithstanding, the Justices who offered *stare decisis* as a reason for reaffirming *Roe v. Wade* are not to be equated with More. *Roe* was an unconstitutional usurpation of legislative power by judges. The Constitution itself far outweighs anything a Court may say in falsifying the document. Imagine that a judge prior to More had plainly tortured a false meaning out of a statute. Should More passively accept the deformity and repeat the falsity? I doubt that he would, but if he did, he would indeed be no more admirable than the Justices who accept the constitutional outrage of *Roe*. We ought not make a shrine of *stare decisis* in order to preserve a flagrant distortion of the law.

It is quite possible that Thomas More, as Timothy Lynch suggests, would have condemned the American revolutionaries as traitors. Many Americans of the time did just that. I do not find that "startling," though one may agree or disagree with it. The notion that "jury nullification," far from being a "pernicious practice," was intended by the Founders, rests on an unwarranted extrapolation. In colonial and revolutionary times, Americans preferred juries to judges because jurors were fellow Americans and judges were royal appointees enforcing English law regarded as oppressive. The jury was, in short, a body of potential civil disobedients in the struggle against the Crown. There is no similar justification for a modern jury engaging in a revolutionary struggle against a legislature their fellow Americans elected. I doubt that the Founders would have applauded the O. J. Simpson verdict, however sincerely each juror voted "according to his own best understanding, judgment, and conscience."

Messrs. Henry Schultz and Mark L. Chance are agitated by my view that General Pinochet should not be extradited from the United Kingdom to stand trial in Spain. My original article spoke to most of their concerns. It is more than a bit nauseating to hear of a law forbidding "crimes against humanity" when it is obvious that what is involved is not law but politicized force. It is worth noting that both French and Spanish courts have dismissed Pinochet-type proceedings against Fidel Castro. This "law" applies only to leaders and citizens of small, powerless countries on the right while the most murderous lead-

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ers of powerful or leftist countries (e.g., China and Cuba) are courted, flattered, and feted. The Spanish magistrate wants to try Pinochet for the killings of Chileans and six Spaniards. The former matter should be regarded as concluded by the agreement under which Pinochet relinquished power (if it is to be abrogated, that is a matter for Chileans) and the latter is a subject for negotiation between the Spanish and Chilean governments. What is proposed instead is foreign judicial interference in a Chilean domestic political settlement and in Spain's conduct of foreign relations.

To take this position does not require an assessment of Pinochet's behavior. Still, there is something to be said on that subject. Mr. Chance writes a brief for Salvador Allende, placing the blame for much of what happened on the CIA and Pinochet. This is the distorted account propagated by the left and accepted by the American media. The CIA was practically irrelevant in the destabilization of Chile created by Allende's policies. U.S. involvement consisted of financial support for opposition newspapers and radio stations and for democratic political parties. If Mr. Chance calls that "destabilization," he is welcome to the word. The fight against the radical left in Chile involved bloodshed and oppression, but it is also true of the Allende government, as Eduardo Frei, a former president of Chile put it: "There is no doubt that what was eventually envisaged was a government of a totalitarian type. No doubt whatever." For a balanced assessment, I recommend *Modern Chile 1970-1989: A Critical History*, by Mark Falcoff, my colleague at the American Enterprise Institute.

Whether Thomas More would, on the whole, have approved Pinochet's actions must remain an open question; he did, after all, approve the execution of Protestant proselytizers as threats to men's salvation. I would say to both Mr. Schultz and Mr. Chance that righteous indignation is no substitute for moral judgment informed by facts and by comparison of relative goods and evils. One need not idealize Pinochet to see that, granting his very real sins, under very difficult circumstances he performed a valuable service in saving Chile from communism. If there is one thing bitter and repeated experience has taught us, it is that the Communists would not have relinquished power to democratic processes as he did.

RJN on WJC

In "Bill Clinton and the American Character" (June/July), Richard John Neuhaus assumes that Christians must be involved in "cultural engagement." He quotes Charles Colson, who says that he "can't imagine anything more self-defeating, or more ill-timed" than "battle-weary evangelicals abandoning cultural engagement." He declares such a position both "unbiblical" and a desertion of the cause "just when we are on the verge of making a historic breakthrough."

Indeed, Mr. Colson says we are charged with bringing "Christ's redemption to all of life" and must know that "despair is (probably) a sin." However, those two biblical propositions do not yield a mandate for immersion in affairs of the state. Such a mandate seems more likely to issue from the presuppositions of the National Prayer Breakfast that Father Neuhaus calls "an annual orgy of civil religion in devotion to Americanism and a mostly unnamed God."

It is not surprising for Fr. Neuhaus to stand on the low foundations of civil religion in his pulpit on the Public Square. Like most American Christians he has internalized the "common assumption" that God probably carries a blue passport and happily shares honors with the stars and stripes on church platforms. When my son (born in the Dominican Republic) was about five years old, he wondered aloud why people in a large Denver church were singing "I'm Proud To Be an American" in the worship service. Now eighteen, he is cutting through the inherent contradictions.

I will not be depressed even if the Pope, Colson, and Neuhaus are wrong (I hope they are not) about the coming "springtime of Christianity." As a believer I find God's mercies to be "new every morning" regardless of the disasters of the day.

William T. Hunter, Jr.
Santo Domingo,
Dominican Republic

Richard John Neuhaus' "Bill Clinton and the American Character" is an impressive essay. However, I think he dismisses too easily Shelby Steele's argument about a generational shift in what defines morality and virtue. Trashing "bourgeois morality" became an integral part of the New Left's struggle against war, racism, sexism, and all the other isms it came up with. This mindset captured the culture in the 1970s. Once the Cold War was over, its political triumph was a matter of time. Only a few of us went to Oxford, but too many of us "inhaled," slept around, and protested the iniquities of "Amerika." We cannot condemn Bill Clinton without condemning ourselves. In the immortal words of Walt Kelly, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

I'll grant that Baby Boomers were the foot soldiers rather than the leaders of the 1960s cultural revolutions. I'll even admit that we aren't all reprobates. But the reprobates rule and have ways of dealing with dissent. Invective works: traditionalists have been demonized as the dreaded fanatics of the Religious Right. The repentant can be neutralized by exposure of what they did before they saw the error of their ways. But the reprobate rule mainly by seduction. In a culture saturated with sex, most will succumb. Most who succumb will grow addicted to their vices and will

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defend a regime that guarantees them. (Journalist Nina Burleigh said it best when she said that she'd gladly service the President for keeping abortion legal.) Blackmail and exposure will neutralize those who turn against the regime (Hyde, Barr, and Livingston, for example). After thirty-plus years of cultural decay, there are plenty of targets for the Larry Flynts of this world.

Evan M. Duncan
Alexandria, Virginia

My thanks to Richard John Neuhaus for his recap of current punditry on what Clintongate tells us about the American character. The spectrum and intensity of opinion, like billowing smoke, lead one to expect something is being revealed about the nation and its people, but precisely what is hard to say. Allow me a try.

The political life of this country has always been tempted to oligarchy. Although regularly repulsed in the first century of our existence, the temptation has remained strong. In the present century, given new recruitment from plutocrats and immigrants, given expanded control stemming from economic integration and broadcast media, the oligarchs have managed a revolt against the rule of the *demos*. Like Augustus, they have merely kept the trappings of the republic. For several decades now the government of the United States has been a functioning oligarchy operating under the guise of democratic forms.

The Clinton presidency marks an interesting oligarchical evolution. Not only are the special people above common folk, their laws and religious constraints, but their superiority extends to moral goodness. They are better than us. Their "lies" are not lies but demonstrations of cleverness; their "sexual predations" are not moral turpitude, but rather expressions of natural exuberance; their "corruption and graft" merely demonstrates an acute sense of business. Above all, their "arrogance" reflects nothing so much as the splendid enlightenment that exudes from their personalities and that is confirmed so readily by their courtiers.

J. R. Breton
Walpole, Massachusetts

Richard John Neuhaus attempts to evaluate the American character in light of the Clinton mess. Many of the changes in American culture mentioned in the essay, such as Shelby Steele's concept of "virtue-by-identification," are a sign of a deeper change in our culture pointed out by social historian Warren Susman. He tracks the shift in emphasis from "character" to "personality" that gradually occurred during the twentieth century. While electronic media have certainly aided this shift, it predates radio and TV. According to Professor Susman, it is connected to an increased need to "express the self" in a developing consumerist mass society.

The triumph of personality over character is confirmed by my students, many of whom seem to conflate the two in favor of personality. Character as inner strength and moral attitude seems irrelevant or unattainable. "All politicians are corrupt" is a common sentiment, so why not pick someone who looks good on MTV?

Given that this cultural situation developed over the past century, it may mean that contemporary Americans can't be blamed for opting for personality over character. But it does mean that we, especially Christians, bear a responsibility for pointing out something that is now intrinsic to our culture, and at least seeing that our own communities don't succumb to it.

Michael Jindra
Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, Minnesota

Much of Richard John Neuhaus' "Bill Clinton and the American Character" is a thorough, well-researched review of Clinton's odious odyssey that evoked in many of us a sense of shame just for being American.

Father Neuhaus recalls the reactions of Catholic leaders, and—lamentably—another wavelet of shame is the lot of us Catholics who squirmed as we suffered through homilies of pious platitudes introduced by the nonjudgmental: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

Normally, I doff my cap—respectfully and submissively—to theologians and bishops who expatiate on Holy Writ, but permit me to, as logicians say, distinguish the major premise: "Let him who is without the combined sins of perjury, adultery, obstruction of justice, sexual adventurism, and, maybe, of rape cast the first stone."

My theologically uneducated guess is that many truckloads of stones would be needed for the party.

Ernest Siciliano
Newton, Massachusetts

"Bill Clinton and the American Character" is a neat summation of the impeachment, but Bill Clinton does not have, as Richard John Neuhaus suggests, a form of autism. Autism is characterized by a deficit of social interaction or social intelligence. Mr. Clinton, however, is impressively socially intelligent. This is his great gift. He endeavors always to "connect" with people, and is very often successful. Autistic people don't understand the value of such connecting. The President understands it only too well.

Mr. Clinton's lies and his propensity to shut himself off from negative public opinion reflect only a strong desire to retain political power. When he has seemed to be oblivious to everything else, it has always been over something vitally important to his political future. His "compartmentalization" can be likened to a badger fighting off an intruder more closely than it can be likened to the actions of an autistic person.

Brian W. Donnelly, M.D.
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

I was impressed by Richard John Neuhaus' thoughtful, perceptive

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analysis of the phenomenon of Bill Clinton in relation to American culture. I would like to add one other possible reason why so many people defend the President and see him as an innocent victim, or even a hero. I think the President benefits from the "Tom Jones" syndrome in popular culture.

The 1963 movie version of Henry Fielding's novel presented Tom Jones as a good-hearted, lovable scamp, a kind of Robin Hood of the bedroom. Tom was always in trouble with women, but he was basically innocent and harmless. Everyone loved him, except for the nasty hypocrites who were the real villains of the movie. Many of the hard-edged comedies of the 1970s, such as *M.A.S.H.* and *Animal House*, followed basically the same theme.

Doesn't this sound a lot like the liberals' scenario of the Bill Clinton mess, with Clinton playing the Tom Jones role and the Republicans the role of the villainous hypocrites? Bill Clinton *is* Tom Jones, according to the liberals—a good-hearted, lovable rogue who triumphs over the evil hypocrites who are out to get him. There is a problem with that scenario, however. Movies are not real life. Real life is far more complicated than the movies.

In real life, Bill Clinton is *not* Tom Jones. Tom Jones, in the movie, was a poor, persecuted, naive young man, hardly more than a boy. Older and more experienced women were constantly taking advantage of him. But this description hardly applies to President Clinton. Clinton is the most powerful man in the world, and is certainly not naive or persecuted. Unlike Tom Jones, he preys upon women who are young or vulnerable. The President is certainly not the harmless, innocent scamp that Tom Jones was portrayed as being.

If we were to compare Bill Clinton to a fictional character, a better comparison might be J. R. Ewing of *Dallas*—a ruthless man who is willing to do whatever he needs to do to gain and hold power and to crush his enemies.

(The Rev.) David J. Armstrong
St. John's United Church of Christ
Egg Harbor City, New Jersey

McGrath on Calvin

In his "Calvin and the Christian Calling" (June/July), Alister McGrath expresses hope that American evangelicals can learn from the French Reformer that believers are called to engage the world with the gospel. While the thought of evangelicals poring over Calvin's works and taking to the streets is an interesting one, I have serious reservations about the ability of any thinker to mobilize this group in any significant fashion.

The social and cultural malaise common to much of the evangelical world and lamented so vocally by its leading thinkers is so deeply ingrained that the words and deeds of any theologian, no matter how impressive, are unlikely to have lasting impact on evangelical social attitudes. This ethos, which unites believers as disparate as Southern Baptists, Pentecostals, and garden variety Bible Church goers, can at times become the object of sophisticated theological analysis, as readers of First Things are aware. More often it remains implicit, where it is difficult to address and challenge. And because this ethos makes Calvin's idea of a church acting as leaven in society so unnatural to most evangelicals, I fear that Professor McGrath's hope will remain unfulfilled.

Perhaps the chief characteristic of the evangelical ethos is an ecclesiology that resembles something like a baptized version of the social contract, in which individual believers, having made their decision to follow Christ, subsequently decide to join a group comprised of other like-minded individuals. To "be a Christian" has little if anything to do with belonging to a community. Faith, fidelity, and fulfillment are viewed strictly in terms of the individual believer's relationship with God. The church is simply what happens when these individuals get together to publicly celebrate their faith. But when Jesus is presented primarily as "my personal savior," as he so often is in the evangelical world, the church and all of the traditional means used to encourage and deepen the communion of the saints—sacraments, ritual, the clergy, and tradition itself, which includes thinkers like Calvin—can easily become irrelevant.

An important ingredient in the evangelical model of the church is the principle of separation from "the world," a principle that continues to plague any attempt to break down the barriers behind which evangelicals hide. Ironically, this separation was perhaps the most characteristic trait of a group that Calvin spent considerable time and effort trying to refute, the so-called Anabaptists. Many if not most evangelicals follow Anabaptism here, which helps to explain why they are so nervous about the diverse forms of public discourse, including the arts, politics, and social action. Prof. McGrath is correct to chide evangelicals, and indeed all Christians, for choosing to remain "safely behind the barricades" that isolate them from social problems. But what other option is there if you believe that human sociality is not essential to Christianity? If the communion of the saints is expendable, what is to be said about any kind of involvement with "sinners"?

Prof. McGrath addresses none of the important questions that arise here, as he seems to have ignored Calvin's ambivalence regarding the continuing goodness and integrity of the world and the connection this ambivalence has to the evangelical disdain for social involvement. Even someone who has never previously read a line from Calvin could detect, upon reading Prof. McGrath's piece, something of Calvin's uncertainty re-

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garding the status of creation after the fall. It should be noted that Calvin often did celebrate the splendors of God's handiwork, including the human part of it, and that those who think he only disparaged the world as hopelessly corrupted and depraved have read him poorly.

I've always thought that one measure of Calvin's ability as a theologian was his ability to hold an ambivalent view of the fallen world and yet take such an active role in calling Christians to that world, flaws and corruptions notwithstanding. American evangelicals are typically more consistent on these points. As one evangelical friend of mine—paraphrasing a noted nineteenth-century evangelist—asked me concerning Christian social involvement, "Why polish the brass handrails on a sinking ship?" Why not focus our energies on the more important and fruitful work of evangelizing lost souls and better preparing our own for heaven? The needs of a fallen world seem rather irrelevant to people whose ethos expresses itself through individualism and indifference to that world.

Anthony DiStefano
Mesa, Arizona

Thank you for publishing Alister McGrath's very well done essay on John Calvin. Calvin has much in him that is appealing, but Professor McGrath does not mention the Catholic objection to him. Calvin, when all is said and done, is responsible for the disenchantment of the Catholic world, what Max Weber called the *Entzauberung der Welt*. It is nothing less than God's removal from his creation. No wonder Calvinists normally abandon God rather quickly. Geneva was hardly Calvinist even in Rousseau's day, and a half century later d'Alembert got Genevan Calvinists into trouble by congratulating the Genevan clergy for not believing in orthodox Christianity. Calvinist Harvard was already Unitarian in the late eighteenth century. Calvinism survived only in the backwaters of Friesland and Scotland and perhaps Transylvania. All in all Calvin's influence has not been a good one.

Norman Ravitch
Department of History
University of California, Riverside

Alister McGrath rightly points out that John Calvin helped the Christian understand that he "has a vocation to serve God in the world—in every sphere of human existence—lending a new dignity and meaning to ordinary work."

A fundamental problem with Professor McGrath's essay is his exhortation—ostensibly based upon Calvin's theology—that Christians are "called to be priests to the world, purifying and sanctifying its everyday life from within." This exhortation does not and could not come from John Calvin's theology.

In order for a Christian to purposefully purify and sanctify the world, he must have a vital interest in the world. He must believe that the world is essentially good (although fallen), has its end in Christ, and that he is actually able to participate here and now with Christ to sanctify the world. But Calvin had no vital interest in the world; his theology was purely theocentric. He believed, as Prof. McGrath points out, that "creation is neither blessed nor desirable in itself." How can the Christian hold this position and at the same time desire to sanctify the world? How can the Christian possibly be effective leaven while remaining indifferent about the loaf?

An alternative and integral doctrine of vocation is based upon incarnational theology, which was both rescued and developed by Thomas Aquinas. The starting point of the Angelic Doctor was, in the words of G. K. Chesterton, "the praise of Life, the praise of Being, the praise of God as the Creator of the world." Simply stated, this song of praise led (albeit slowly) to a doctrine of vocation whereby man is taught to pursue holiness by serving God and man on the basis of his gifts and within the circumstances of his daily life. However, the key difference between the two doctrines is that the doctrine that developed from St. Thomas affirms the world and directly impels man to engage it. The Christian who lives according to this doctrine of vocation understands that the fallen creation, including every person, public institution, and the whole natural order, has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. Further, he understands that the creation has its end in Christ and that he has the great privilege of participating with Christ in its sanctification and purification through his calling.

Joshua Miller
Lexington, Kentucky

I want to commend First Things for publishing Alister McGrath's excellent article, "Calvin and the Christian Calling." With historical insight, Professor McGrath shows why Calvin remains an important source for Christian political thought. However, perhaps because of the brevity of the article, he presents a somewhat one-sided picture of Calvin's social ethics, ignoring Calvin's deep concern with the *imago dei* and the poor.

Citing Calvin's discussion of 2 Thessalonians 10, Prof. McGrath notes Calvin's heavy emphasis on the value of labor. Moreover, he rightly refers to Calvin's circumstances in Geneva to account for this emphasis on work. However, Prof. McGrath says little about Calvin's continual insistence that state and society have a moral obligation to help the poor. For example, in his famous exegesis of the Decalogue, Calvin argues that the Eighth Commandment not only prohibits theft, but also obliges us to be concerned with the material welfare of our neighbors (*Institutes*, II, viii, 45). The ethical ground for this obligation is that all humans are made in God's image, and love of neighbor requires that we value the

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imago dei in all that we do. When governments and other associations allow people to starve or suffer extreme poverty, they denigrate the divine image.

This theme of the *imago dei* and poverty appears throughout Calvin's sermons and commentaries (see in particular his *Sermons from Job* and his *Sermons on 2 Samuel*), and I find it odd that Prof. McGrath never mentions it. In discussing usury, he does say that "Calvin was sensitive to the pressures upon capital in a more or less free market, and believed that the ethical aims of the usury prohibition could be safeguarded by other means." However, he fails to mention Calvin's radical reinterpretation of the usury prohibition. In his commentaries on the Pentateuch, Calvin argues that those granting loans are morally forbidden from charging interest to the poor. Such policies violate equity and detract from human dignity.

Today, a proposal to provide interest-free loans to the poor would strike many Americans as politically radical. However, my point is neither to locate Calvin on our own impoverished political spectrum, nor deny that he affirms a moral obligation to contribute to the common good. Instead, I am suggesting that any retrieval of Calvin's ethic must acknowledge his deep concern for the poor and his accent on the *imago dei*.

Derek Jeffreys
Chicago, Illinois

What Hungary Needs

I certainly don't wish to denigrate Richard Grenier's wonderful essay "Letter from Budapest" (June/July), but I would like to offer my observations from a trip I made to Hungary a few years ago.

What is most discouraging are the ubiquitous kiosks on city corners, sometimes next to churches and synagogues, displaying from top to bottom nothing but lurid nudie magazines. Budapest is known worldwide for sex clubs that wouldn't be tolerated here even by the most liberal minded under our First Amendment protection. And right along the quay side of the Danube at the Forum Hotel, almost any evening there is a continual parade of prostitutes, some of whom stop to chat with the local police.

I am very much in love with Hungary and its people, but I see a beautiful woman in a cheap dress with the hem pulled up above the knee and looking longingly toward the West. It is obvious in conversations with the young that Hungarians have become intoxicated with the allurements of Western culture, mostly for the worse. They have adopted cohabitation, free love, the pill, and drugs. Statistics on abortion, suicide, alcoholism, and life expectancy are among the worst in Europe.

Hungary doesn't need our movies or videos, our pills or drugs, nor our armaments. What Hungary is in dire need of is spirituality and the human values it encompasses.

Lawrence E. Petrus
Rocky River, Ohio

Christianity and Homosexuality

After reading "Gays, Lesbians, and Lutherans" (June/July) by James Nuechterlein, my immediate feelings were a mixture of confusion and profound disappointment; far, far better if not more enlightened commentary than this is what I have come to expect from First Things.

To attack the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Division for Outreach with such blatant contemptuous sarcasm for making an effort to extend a welcoming hand to human beings who have been marginalized solely due to prejudices stemming from ancient desert tribal prohibitions is unconscionable. Mr. Nuechterlein has fallen headlong into the impossible position of the more hysterical fundamentalist hate-mongers who maintain that any accommodation made towards gays and lesbians is "promoting homosexuality."

It is inconceivable that in this day and age rational, educated people could demand that *anyone* disguise the accidents of his or her birth as well as swear to total celibacy as the price of admission to worship God. The whole concept flies in the face of what civilization is all about; neither is it very far removed from the spirit of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935.

I am a Roman Catholic and a gay man who has been in a monogamous relationship for twenty-five years; I have witnessed the serial marriages and divorces of my siblings and relatives, and while I do not believe in the sacramentality of gay marriages, I most certainly *do* demand the legal and social rights and privileges accorded to straight marriages.

Insofar as the Bible is littered with ancient, bizarre prohibitions, now ignored, homosexuality is clung to with amazing tenacity; did the prophets indicate which rules were iron-clad and which negotiable? The ELCA has done a thoughtful thing, and all should applaud it.

Douglas Hammerich
Citrus Heights, California

James Nuechterlein replies:
Douglas Hammerich thinks he has a quarrel with me. The tone and content of his letter, however, reveals that his problem—and that of the ethical solipsists in liberal churches such as the ELCA—is much larger than that. Just for starters, there is 2,000 years of Christian teaching, which cannot be disposed of by tired argument-by-insult complaints about "ancient, bizarre prohibitions," "fundamentalist hate-mongers," and "Nuremberg laws."

The State of Quebec

Preston Jones ("Quebec After Catholicism," June/July) is evidently too young to remember Quebec under Maurice Duplessis, but I am not. At that time, the French-speaking major-

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ity in Quebec suffered substantial discrimination in employment, education, and housing. The province was ruled by a tiny Anglophone minority, for whom Duplessis acted as agent. The Church was silent about this state of affairs and thus was perceived by many to be complicit in it.

So it is really not surprising that when the Quebecois began to take control of their own political life, there was an anticlerical element in their movement. A similar thing has happened in other countries (Ireland, for example) where members of the Church hierarchy were slow to recognize their flock's legitimate aspirations to self-government. In other cases, such as Lithuania in the last century, the Church has been better attuned to people's political aspirations and has suffered no such backlash.

Mr. Jones seems also to have missed the theatricality and the wit in Charles de Gaulle's famous "*Vive le Québec libre!*" At the time, it seemed to me a marvelous tweaking of Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy. Despite all its fine rhetoric about the self-determination of peoples (see, for example, the Atlantic Charter), the Anglophone establishment was apoplectic to see its grand ideas being taken seriously in its own backyard.

Austin L. Hughes
State College, Pennsylvania

Preston Jones states the conventional wisdom of the Canadian media and academy that Catholicism is no longer relevant to Quebec nationalism. So the story goes, and Mr. Jones reiterates, Catholicism ceased to be relevant as a result of the so-called Quiet Revolution in Quebec in the 1960s. The article seems like a rebuttal to my own article in the November 1998 issue of *Catholic World Report*, in which I show how Catholicism remains an important component of Quebec nationalism.

As I type this letter, I am back from a trip to Montreal, where the city recently celebrated the most patriotic day of the year in Quebec, St. Jean Baptiste Day, celebrated every year on June 24. That Quebec has an official patron saint whose feast day is a public holiday throughout the province is one exhibit in a large body of evidence that Quebec nationalism still has a strong Catholic content.

Should Mr. Jones have a reply, I suggest it is predictable. He will cite the secular agenda of the current separatist government in Quebec, as he has already pointed out that Church power in the French-speaking province is not what it once was. But the hard core, rank-and-file separatists (as opposed to the Francophone elite) cherish the Catholic roots of Quebec nationalism. It might even bode well for Canada's national unity that such a schism is rising within the ranks of Quebec separatists.

As to Mr. Jones' reference to Quebec clergy being silenced, perhaps he does not read Canadian newspapers. Jean-Claude Cardinal Turcotte, archbishop of Montreal, made several headlines on New Year's Day of 1998 by declaring that Quebec will decide its own destiny regardless of any opinion issued by the Supreme Court of Canada as to the province's right to secession. And Cardinal Turcotte's words are of more concern in federalist circles than anything separatist Premier Lucien Bouchard has to say.

John O'Neill
Detroit, Michigan

Preston Jones replies:
Austin L. Hughes, whom I thank for writing, is correct about Quebec's economy and Maurice Duplessis' friendliness towards Quebec's Anglo minority. But I doubt that that had a lot to do with average Quebeckers abandoning the Catholic Church. I rather suspect that most Quebeckers left the Church because, following Duplessis' death, their new elite did so. French Quebec has always been, and remains, a conformist society. The absence of any real political and cultural debate there, save on the matters of the preservation of the French language and secession from Canada, is a perennial embarrassment. (Take on Quebec's abortion policy in public and watch what happens.) As for De Gaulle's theatrics, Mr. Hughes makes a good point. But Quebec's nationalists don't usually bring that up in their public musings, and those among the European French who have supported Quebecois nationalism since the late 1960s do not perceive De Gaulle to have been joking.

Which brings me to John O'Neill's letter. I am sorry to say that I didn't read his article in the *Catholic World Report*, though I'd be happy to do so. Mr. O'Neill's point about the St. Jean Baptiste holiday in Quebec is unconvincing. (I've been in Quebec for a few of those myself.) To present the persistence of this now secular annual fete as proof that "Quebec nationalism still has a strong Catholic content" is a bit like saying that, by virtue of its name, Corpus Christi, Texas, is a holy city. In any case, Mr. O'Neill would do well to hold his fire until he is able to distinguish between Quebecois nationalism and Quebecois separatism. Furthermore, does Mr. O'Neill really want to maintain that a single op-ed piece on a political—not an expressly religious or moral—matter by Cardinal Turcotte amounts to serious cultural engagement? The debauched moderator of the United Church of Canada gets into the papers too. What does that really prove? Finally, as far as Mr. O'Neill's "rank-and-file separatists" who "cherish [their] Catholic roots" are concerned, the fact is that Quebec's committed Catholics (a clear minority) tend to be federalists, not separatists. Aside from the fact that most of these Quebeckers are now in late middle age and are therefore more conservative than their younger compatriots, they do not support secession because their identity as French Cana-

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dians in communion with their Catholic history is secure.

The First Novelist

In an otherwise interesting and informative review of Richard White's biography of Daniel Defoe (June/July), Philip Zaleski says "Defoe reinvented himself . . . and became, in 1719, the world's first novelist."

Leaving aside important precursors such as the Greek Aristides, Petronius, Boccaccio, or the great Picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), certainly the first plaque in the Hall of Fame of novelists belongs to none other than Miguel de Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote* (first English translation by Thomas Shelton in 1612).

Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* could be described as the first English novel, but it certainly was neither Europe's nor the world's first novel. It almost goes without saying that *Don Quixote* is a great influence on all English and Western literature, not excluding *Robinson Crusoe*.

Thomas Jefferson felt compelled to teach himself Spanish so he could read the great masterpiece in the original Castillian. Thomas Mann felt it was the one novel that justified being read from cover to cover every ten years, for truly each time it seemed a greater book. Harold Bloom has said Cervantes is a universal genius in the first ranks of the Western Canon, "the only possible peer of Dante and Shakespeare." Truly the paterfamilias of the Western novel is Don Miguel Cervantes, and we could sooner forget Homer, Virgil, Jim Thorpe, Jackie Robinson, Michael Jordan, Pele, Hank Aaron, or Babe Ruth (with apologies to Ms. Brandi Chastain)! Eurocentrism is one thing, but it is an error to suppose that England is an island and the mother of all good things. Leave something to the Greeks, the Poles, the Spanish, and the Scots.

Richard K. Munro
Bakersfield, California

Philip Zaleski replies:
My thanks to Mr. Munro for his feisty letter. I must quibble with a few of his contentions. Ranking Cervantes above Virgil is one thing; ranking him above Babe Ruth is another, as all lovers of mystical games (and what is Don Quixote's quest but that?) must agree. As for Thomas Mann's assertion that *Don Quixote* is the one novel worth reading every ten years, I reply with the words of Mr. Betteridge in Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, who reads *Robinson Crusoe* every ten days or so, and who says of it, "I have found it my friend in need in all the necessities of this mortal life." Finally, in regard to my statement that *Robinson Crusoe* is the world's first novel, Mr. Munro is right. I should have written "first English novel" or perhaps "first modern novel." For the sake of the weightier matters discussed above, I happily concede the point.

Faith & Historical Criticism

Gary A. Anderson, in his review of Richard Friedman's new book *The Hidden Book in the Bible* (June/July), makes the following statement: "Only fundamentalists would dispute the historical layering implied by source criticism." The problem here is three-fold:

1) It is incorrect. Traditional Judaism explicitly and completely rejects biblical criticism and its conclusions, declaring, "The Torah that is in our possession today is the exact Torah that was given to Moses at Sinai." This statement is one of Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Faith, and is one line of a song (*Yigdal*) sung by most Jews on Friday night.

2) Professor Anderson uses "fundamentalist" as a pejorative—as though a "fundamentalist" is someone who is incapable of serious scholarly thought. Such prejudice is unfortunately common in the scholarly world, but I should hope First Things would make an effort to avoid this.

3) It is intellectually and morally wrong. In the words of Rabbi Barry Freundel, "No one has ever been moved to a stronger relationship with G-d by the documentary hypothesis." One of the (many) problems with the documentary hypothesis is that it undermines the idea of a moral standard—everything that is forbidden becomes a mere "cultural prejudice."

David Barak
Washington, D.C.

Gary A. Anderson replies:
On point one, see the superb essay of Jon Levenson, "The Eighth Principle of Judaism" in the *Journal of Religion*, 68 (1998). Not all traditional Jews reject biblical criticism in toto.

On point two, I use the term "fundamentalist" to mark the big divide intellectually (not necessarily in terms of practice) between those who hold their primary sources up to the rigors of historical criticism and those who don't. For Jews the primary sticking point is whether Moses is the author of the entire law; for Christians, the positing of an historical Jesus who does not exactly match the Christ of faith. I am sorry if the term offends, but I know no other way to mark this difference briefly.

On point three, I would concede the tenor of Mr. Barak's criticism. Historical criticism puts the organ of human reason at the helm of the interpretive project. Yet many modern persons cannot be persuaded by a faith that appears unreasonable. I am reminded of an aphorism attributed to the late Jewish philosopher Ernst Simon: "Those with whom I pray I cannot talk to; those with whom I can talk, I cannot pray." Retaining a vital piety and moral rigor within a framework of historical-critical reflection is not an easy matter. But we do have leaders in this effort: the likes of Moshe Greenberg, Jon Levenson,

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Brevard Childs, and Richard Hays, among others.

Pius XII and the Jews

I must take issue with Richard John Neuhaus' complaint about Jewish objections to the beatification of Pope Pius XII (While We're At It, June/July). I write as a committed Catholic who does not take lightly the campaign currently waged against Christianity and Catholicism in particular. However, I do not find anything remarkable about the Jewish community's objection to the possible beatification of Eugenio Pacelli. It would, I admit, be helpful were we to hear concurrent condemnations of Roosevelt and Churchill, but the people of Israel have every right to comment on a man whose actions were intimately bound up with their survival during World War II.

The defenses of Pius XII are hollow and ignoble. One hears that he opened convents to Italian Jews and that he was persuaded to take a more passive attitude only by the Nazi reaction to the declaration of the Dutch bishops. That simply will not do. The existence of the Jewish people is a living icon of Christ's presence in the world. Our Lord was made man as a Jew and lived among Jews throughout his life. This if nothing else marks the Jewish people as crucial to the economy and mystery of salvation. The slaughter of European Jewry was not only horrific genocide but also nothing less than an attack on Our Lord himself, and the proper Christian response was Bonhoeffer's, not Pacelli's. The call for Christians during the period of the annihilation of European Jewry was witness and resistance even if it involved martyrdom.

The argument that a more forceful stand by Pius XII would have invited more severe Nazi reprisals strikes me as the most disingenuous and disturbing of all. More severe? What exactly would count as more severe? For the Jewish community *nothing* could have been more severe. If one means that there would have been reprisals against the Christian community, so be it. It is central to Christian belief, as I understand it, that the time of trial may come when we must risk and if need be offer our lives. If a flawed and fallible man like Oskar Schindler, "one of the least observant sons of the Church" as he has been called, understood this, it is inexcusable that the Vicar of Christ should not have risked everything to save our fathers in faith. John Paul II would do no less, which makes his efforts to beatify Eugenio Pacelli all the more puzzling.

Robert Alpert
Newton, Massachusetts

RJN replies:
As I said, I hold no brief for the beatification of Pius XII, nor do I possess Mr. Alpert's certitude about what he should or should not have done in circumstances the rest of us have been spared. I do not think Dietrich Bonhoeffer's support of tyrannicide can be turned into a generalizable principle; I wonder if "so be it" is not a somewhat callous response to the prospect of reprisals against others; and I am sure that the Catholic Church is competent to decide the status of Pius XII without the diplomatic assistance of the State of Israel.

Something to Meditate On

Regarding Gabriel Garcia Marquez's dinner conversation with President Bill Clinton (While We're At It, June/July): I was surprised to discover Clinton's favorite book is the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius.

The President should reread XII.17: "If it is not right, don't do it; if it is not true, don't say it."

Joan D. Roach
Norristown, Pennsylvania

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THIS TIME

The Bus Stops Here

James Nuechterlein

It's a sad but unavoidable question: Where did the civil rights movement go wrong? A cause that, at its modern origins in the 1950s, no decent person could oppose has over the years taken turns that even many of its most committed advocates find morally problematic. It's been a long downhill journey from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s March on Washington in 1963 to where we are today. The problem is not simply with the obvious charlatans and demagogues who have become attached to the movement—the ministers Farrakhan and Sharpton, for example—but with the misguided policies that the most respected of civil rights leaders have in recent years seen fit to take up.

Foremost among the roads better not taken is, of course, the embrace of the racial quota system. That transformed a self-evidently just insistence on expansion of traditional American rights to include citizens of all races into a demand for group entitlements that was not merely alien to the American creed but inimical to it. Of that folly critics have taken frequent note.

A less obvious wrong turning reached, one hopes, its dead end just recently. On September 10 Federal District Judge Robert D. Potter ordered an end to the school busing system in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg (North Carolina) School District. This was not the first ruling of its kind. According to the report in the *New York Times*, programs of busing to achieve racial integration in schools have already been struck down in cities such as Nashville, Oklahoma City, Denver, and Cleveland. Like Charlotte, those cities have been certified as officially desegregated and thus no longer subject to court-imposed busing systems to maintain racial balances throughout the school system.

What makes the decision to end busing in Charlotte notable is that it was there that busing began thirty years ago. It was in 1969 that Judge James McMillan of the Federal District Court ruled that the district had been intentionally segregated—virtually all black students went to all-black schools—and ordered a district-wide busing system to achieve integration. Two years later the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the ruling (*Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*) and soon federal judges imposed desegregation orders on scores of cities across the country similar to the one in Charlotte.

The precise meaning of the *Swann* decision remained murky for years. The Charlotte situation had been relatively clear-cut. The city had intentionally constructed and maintained a segregated school system. But what of situations where a dual-race system arose not de jure but de facto, i.e., in response to housing patterns in which public officials and public policy had little or no direct role? (Many liberals, including the district judge in the Charlotte case, insisted that residential segregation was always, in the end, de jure. The actions of government—through zoning boards, urban renewal agencies, public housing authorities, school boards, etc.—inevitably contributed, or so the argument went, to residential segregation.) In any case, what constituted segregation? What amount of racial disparity in the schools compared to district-wide population ratios could pass muster? Must all schools in a district precisely reflect the overall black-white ratio? Were single-race schools ever acceptable?

The questions extended to the remedy of busing. Was it to apply to all students from kindergarten on, or only to those in higher grades? Was it to be voluntary or mandatory? Suppose, as was the case, that some black parents preferred that their children remain in their neighborhood school, without regard to its racial make-up. Must they nonetheless acquiesce in having their children bused elsewhere in order to achieve racial balance?

Chief Justice Warren Burger, who wrote the 9-0 *Swann* decision, achieved unanimity only by avoiding clear answers to almost all these questions. *Swann* was a masterpiece of ambiguity. Burger himself interpreted it narrowly. It required only, he insisted, the end of official segregation. The imperatives that civil rights leaders (and many federal judges) read into the decision—forced integration, mass busing, racial balance—were simply, in his view, not there. But a great many judges, both on and off the Supreme Court, thought they were, and, at least until recently, the broader reading of *Swann* has prevailed.

From the beginning, civil rights leaders—the NAACP in particular—adopted the broadest conceivable reading of the decision. *Swann* to them required as comprehensive a system of busing as was necessary not merely to end segregation but to achieve precise racial balance. Thus, for example, in Charlotte they fought for and got a policy whereby

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each school would reflect the district's overall 60-40 white-black ratio. This meant that every day almost 30 percent of the students had to ride buses past their neighborhood schools, even in situations where those schools were underenrolled because not enough children of the desirable color were available.

Enough such bizarre occurrences and some federal judges, at least, began to take note. Thus Judge Potter halted busing in Charlotte because, he said, no remnants of intentional discrimination remain. Housing patterns in the area are such that in the absence of compulsory busing it is estimated that more than half of the district's students will attend schools with little or no racial diversity. The judge noted, however, that the Supreme Court has decided that school districts are not required to rectify racial imbalances in residential housing.

The civil rights establishment throughout the country has reacted with dismay to the dismantling of busing systems. Even where, as in Charlotte, they and their liberal allies control the school board, they have pushed the counterintuitive argument that courts should force the boards to continue busing on the grounds that they have not complied with the original desegregation decrees and need continued court supervision. Judge Potter found that argument distinctly unpersuasive.

It sum, it would seem that the civil rights movement made a massive error in investing so much time, energy, and moral fervor in such a dubious cause as mandatory school busing. The attempt to require racial balance in the schools lacked either a mass constituency or a plausible rationale. Most parents, black or white, were reluctant to send their children out of their neighborhoods to attend distant schools, especially when those schools were perceived, often correctly, as educationally inferior or even physically unsafe. Those who favored mandatory busing were seldom those whose own children were involved.

No one ever satisfactorily explained why racial balance was considered necessary to achieve decent education for black children. The apparent assumption that those children could learn effectively only in the presence of some critical mass of white children struck many blacks as condescending at best. Busing wasted money that would have been better spent in classrooms; it created unnecessary racial and class divisions; and, after all that, it wound up failing anyway. One school system after another on which busing was imposed resegregated itself through white flight.

Why so much investment by so many people in so unlikely a cause? Perhaps the best explanation is that well-intentioned people unreflectively supported busing because it seemed a symbol of a noble end. One cannot think of many instances in which the cost of symbolic politics has been higher.

In Charlotte, as elsewhere, the school buses have stopped running. It's about time. FT

Oriental

for Robin, my daughter

Last spring we planted a small
Japanese maple. So meager and spindly,
its few leaves curving over its pencil-thin
stem like a derelict, half-open umbrella.

We could only imagine this year's
perfection, the dappled shade it would cast,
there, by the standing stone, its leaves
like little hands unfolding their rich, red

translucency, blessing the Chinese
water bowl half full of rounded beach stones,
its surface dimpled as water pours,
like music, from the bamboo spout.

Luci Shaw

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Opinion

Attacking the Tabernacle

Peter J. Leithart

For more than two decades, Psalm 139:13 has served as a slogan for the anti-abortion movement, adorning banners and picket signs from Boston to the Bay and everywhere in between. And the text is entirely appropriate to the sermon. One can hardly imagine a clearer affirmation of God's care for the unborn than the simple words of the Psalm: "For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb." It simply will not do to limit this sentiment to the Psalmist, as if he alone were "fearfully and wonderfully made." The Psalmist sees God's care for him as a specific case of the universal truth that God is the inescapable God, who formed us at the beginning and who has always already arrived before we get to our end. If the Psalmist is a fabric woven by God, so are we all. Opponents of abortion have drawn the unavoidable conclusion: If God takes such care in forming unborn children, how dare we treat fetuses as blobs of disposable tissue?

Further meditation on this text, however, leads into different and deeper waters, suggesting that abortion is not only slaughter on a grand scale, but something even more terrible. The Hebrew word used by the Psalmist for "woven" (*raqam*) is a comparatively rare word in the Old Testament, employed almost exclusively in texts that describe the curtains and veils of Israel's wilderness tabernacle. The screen that stretched across the doorway of the tent, for example, was the "work of a *roqem*" (Exodus 26:36), as was the curtain at the entry to the tabernacle courtyard. Unlike the more elaborate and valuable *hosheb*-weave, *roqem* weaving did not include figures of cherubim and the like, but in contrast to cruder *oreg* material, *roqem* used colorful, finely woven linen. To say that an unborn child is "*roqem* work" is to say something about the cunning skill of the Weaver and about the beauty of his fabric.

Beyond that, the Psalm's language suggests an analogy between the tabernacle and the infant. Within Exodus, the symbolism of the tabernacle resonates in several related directions. The tabernacle is, as Philo and Josephus recognized, a microcosm, a small model of the universe in architectural form. There are also parallels between Mount Sinai and the tent that was first pitched at its base. Above all, the tent was the dwelling place of Yahweh among his people. Just as Israel lived in tents and moved from place to place, so the Lord lived among his people in a tent and moved with them. Because the tabernacle was a dwelling of Yahweh, it was a holy place, sanctified, as all holy places are, by the presence of Yahweh in his glory. Among other things, a holy place is inviolable, forbidden land. The tabernacle was off-limits except to authorized persons. And the gate of this holy space was covered by a curtain of *roqem* work.

Throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh responds to violations of holy space with terrifying swiftness. Immediately after the erection of the tabernacle, Aaron's sons offered incense improperly, and were instantly killed. Korah and his allies challenged Aaron's priestly privileges, and for their encroachment on Aaron's holiness, the earth opened and swallowed them alive. Later, King Uzziah was struck with leprosy for performing the priestly task of offering incense. Treading the earth is perfectly safe; but breaking through the boundaries onto consecrated ground is sacrilege, and very, very dangerous.

In the New Testament, tabernacle imagery is applied explicitly to individuals. John tells us that, in Jesus, the Word "tabernacled" among us (John 1:14), and both Paul and Peter speak of their bodies as "dwelling places" that will be torn down at death. Though these New Testament references make parallels between person and tent more explicit, the analogy is already implicit in the Old Testament. This is especially evident in Israel's high priest, whose vestments were made of materials similar to those of the tabernacle curtains. Clothed in the priestly garments, the high priest was a human tabernacle. Psalm 52:5 broadens the imagery when it threatens that God will tear the wicked man "away from his tent," and in one of Jeremiah's famous laments he complains that his "tent is destroyed, and all my ropes are broken" (Jeremiah 10:20).

Psalm 139, then, is picking up on a known thread of imagery when it compares the formation of an infant in the womb to his being "woven" like a tent curtain. In the womb, the Lord weaves the tent that the infant will "wear" until he puts it off at death. With its allusions to the *roqem* work of the tabernacle, the Psalm goes further, implying not only that God has made the infant in the womb, but also that the

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infant is being woven into a dwelling for God. Abortion attacks not only a creature of God but a house of God. The abortionist's instruments pierce through the unfinished *roqem* curtains and tread on holy ground. We are talking here not only about slaughter of the innocent but about sacrilege, a direct attack on "space" claimed by God. That is the most serious offense possible. Paul's warning hovers ominously over our nation: "If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy."

When we have left in tatters the tents God wove for Himself, how shall He dwell among us?

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The (Mis)Guided Dream of Graham Greene

Robert Royal

Graham Greene was a great novelist of a special kind. Unlike many literary practitioners in this century, he did not experiment with language, subvert traditional narrative, or choose exotic subjects. He simply used the powerful imagination that led him to speak of his work as a "guided dream." That imagination—fired, at least during the great middle years, by intense moral and religious perception—made Greene's fiction the best-realized portrayal in its time of the drama of the human soul.

Greene's own inner life was conflicted and obscure. A stint in MI6, the British intelligence service, during World War II further complicated an already mysterious private world. Kim Philby, Greene's supervisor for part of the war would defect to the Soviet Union fifteen years later, and Greene spent much of his life offering limp apologies for his friend and the cause for which he betrayed his country. When Greene wrote an introduction to the English edition of Philby's autobiography, he basically excused the treason as the result of idealism. In his later years Greene flirted (and more than flirted) with the Soviets, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, and the Sandinistas, up to the very moment that communism was on its last legs. The same writer who had written a moving account of Communist atrocities against the Catholic Church in Mexico during the 1930s became an advocate of the slack Christian-Marxist "dialogue" of the 1980s. Despite the impressive labors of Norman Sherry, Greene's authorized biographer, and most recently W. J. West, the man remains an enigma, wrapped inside a mystery.

Greene was born in 1904 in Berkhamsted. His father was headmaster of the private school Greene attended, setting up a classic Greene conflict: loyalty to his father versus the impossible desire to be one of the boys. In his stunning travel book on Mexico, *The Lawless Roads*, Greene reveals that he asked for faith at Berkhamsted and got it with a characteristic twist: "I began to believe in Heaven because I believed in Hell."

Some kind of breakdown occurred at sixteen, perhaps the result of tension at school. He lived for six months with self-proclaimed Jungian analyst Kenneth Richmond and his attractive wife, Zoe. Richmond was a quack with no formal training. And something happened between Greene and Zoe. Rumors circulated that one of the Richmond children was Greene's—an unpromising start for a man prone to impossible romantic longings.

Seemingly as a defense against depression, Greene became filled—as he would be throughout his life—with wanderlust. While an Oxford undergraduate, Greene got himself hired to do espionage in Ireland and in French-occupied Germany in exchange for free travel. He briefly joined the Communist party, partly in the hope of a free trip to Moscow (though he may well have been working, West believes, for British intelligence as a double agent).

Greene had always been interested in Catholicism, and when he married Vivienne Dayrell Browning, a Catholic convert, he converted as well. Yet nothing—love, religion, foreign travel, intrigue—could ever quiet some deep restlessness within Greene. It was not mere youthful bravado that made him write to Vivienne during their courtship: "The only thing worth doing at the moment seems to be to go and get killed somehow in an exciting manner." He had played Russian roulette at home after his psychoanalysis and perhaps later at Oxford.

Nonetheless, he was beginning to make his way. After a couple of flops, Greene deliberately courted success with *Stamboul Train* (1932), a book aimed at moviegoers. But he hit his full stride with *The Power and the Glory* (1940), the story of a whiskey priest during the Mexican Revolution, tormented by his own cowardice and weakness, who eventually dies,

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after one act of religious heroism, in front of a Communist firing squad.

In *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) and *The End of the Affair* (1951), the other two books in what is sometimes thought of as a trilogy of his middle years, Greene began writing about a question closer to home: adultery and its effects on religious belief. Though Greene and his wife lived together for a dozen years and had two children, around 1940 he began an affair with Dorothy Glover. He later claimed that the strain of overwork broke up the marriage, but it seems truer to say that a side of Greene's personality had opened up that would always torment him.

Greene quoted Charles Péguy as an epigraph to *The Heart of the Matter:* "The sinner is at the very heart of Christianity. . . . No one is as competent as the sinner in Christian affairs. No one, except the saint." Some readers thought that the honorable police officer Scobie in that novel was meant as a portrait of a saint. But Scobie's dilemma, torn as a Catholic between his duties to his wife and his promises to a desperate young woman with whom he is having an affair, may reflect an ambivalence in Greene himself. Scobie's solution—disguised suicide—recalls a constant temptation.

Without breaking off either his marriage or his affair with Glover, in 1946 Greene began a simultaneous affair with a stunningly beautiful Catholic convert, Catherine Walston, who was also his goddaughter. He dedicated *The End of the Affair* to her. In the book, a writer is having an affair with a neighbor's wife. He and the neighbor have a strange friendship, as did Greene and Catherine's husband. When a German bomb hits the building where the lovers are meeting, the woman spontaneously prays to God that she will change her life if only her lover is not dead. Almost miraculously, he is not. But this sets off a titanic tug-of-war in several characters' souls about the relative claims of human and divine love.

The End of the Affair was a scandalous success, so much so that some Catholic wags complained that it gave the impression Christ had said: "If you love me, break my commandments." Greene and Walston were certainly busy doing that. Greene began rationalizing the affair, even getting advice from some priests that it was all right to go to confession again and again knowing he would immediately resume the liaison. Greene's earlier sense of the acute tension between earthly and heavenly impulses gradually slid into a much more lax Catholicism.

This character flaw weakened his art, as he himself might have predicted. One of his central contentions as a literary critic was that after the seventeenth century the novel had degenerated because of a lack of religious seriousness. Only in the nineteenth century, when orthodox religious belief reappeared, were the fullness and depth of the human soul again available to writers. For all their vagaries about religion, Dickens, Hardy, Conrad, Lawrence, and James had all benefited from it. By contrast, he argued, Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster's characters "wandered like cardboard symbols through a world that was paper-thin."

Politics began to replace the drama of the soul in Greene's writings by the 1950s. *The Quiet American* (1956), though not as purely anti-American as often thought, does foreshadow a growing indulgence towards communism. *Our Man in Havana* (1958) pokes fun at the world of espionage. Behind this "entertainment," however, hangs a sense of foreboding about British, American, and other shadowy intelligence forces. Greene was primed for the advent of Fidel Castro, whom he would later defend.

Greene's only other truly important novel, *A Burnt-Out Case,* is set in a leper colony in Africa where the architect Querry (read: query) has fled following the failure of his gift as a designer of churches. Believing in nothing, he tries to help with the patients and is mistakenly characterized as a saint by the European media. Perhaps Greene was feeling unworthy of veneration himself. *A Burnt-Out Case* was the last gasp of a great talent. The later novels—*The Honorary Consul* (1973), *The Human Factor* (1978), *Monsieur Quixote* (1982)—all lack the spiritual depth and emotional fireworks of vintage Greene. They lapse into sloppy ideology and gestures toward a vague liberation theology.

In a 1987 speech Greene gave in Moscow, he claimed to have observed a new thing: "We are fighting—Roman Catholics are fighting—together with Communists, and working together with Communists. We are fighting together against the Death Squads in El Salvador. We are fighting together against the *Contras* in Nicaragua. We are fighting together against General Pinochet in Chile." Gorbachev, who was present at this speech, was only two years away from pulling the plug on the Latin Communists, their Catholic sympathizers, and his own USSR. Greene concluded: "I even have a dream, Mr. General Secretary, that perhaps one day before I die, I shall know that there is an Ambassador of the Soviet Union giving good advice at the Vatican."

W. J. West raises the possibility that Greene may have been working as a double agent with British Intelligence all this time, giving the impression of left-wing sympathies for information-gathering purposes. But that seems quite improbable on West's

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own showing. Just before the re-election of Ronald Reagan in 1984, for example, Greene told a Spanish priest that, if he died, he wanted it known that he would have become a Communist if Reagan were returned to office. Around the same time, Greene told Malcolm Muggeridge that Russia only destroyed the Church's body, while America destroyed its soul. Norman Sherry remarks, "How could his subtle mind engage in such intellectual folly?"

In the end, it's baffling. Greene's insight into the human soul could be as acute as any contemporary's. But his trajectory presents a cautionary tale. Before communism started to break up, Greene had openly admired those Polish Catholics who collaborated with the Communist regime. Such political misjudgments, along with his desire to absolve himself for his own sins, made him unsympathetic to the vision of the human person held up by John Paul II. It comes as no surprise that Greene characterized the Pope's views on sexual matters as "unimaginative and unkind."

Greene's character flaws and Cold War fantasies led to the extinction of a great gift. He went from being the premier English novelist of the soul to an enabler of later and lesser lights who let their appetites and resentments rule their talents. Someday, we will be in a better position to winnow the wheat from the chaff in Greene's rich oeuvre. For the moment, however, he is a sad reminder of much that went awry in the second half of our century.

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Aquinas and the Big Bang

William E. Carroll

One day a little boy asked his mother where he came from. His mother, pleased to have the opportunity to discuss such an important matter with her son, began by offering an elementary account of human biology, even introducing some references to the theory of evolution. Lest she restrict her analysis to the realm of the purely physical, she spoke of God's role in the creation of each human soul, and ultimately of God as the source of all that is. After she had finished, her young son, looking somewhat bemused, said to her that he had wondered about this because his friend next door had told him that he had come from Iowa.

The question of where we come from can be answered in many ways. We need to keep this fact in mind when we turn our attention to the account given by contemporary cosmology of the origins of the universe. The reigning theory among scientists today is that we live in the aftermath, or rather in the midst, of a giant explosion that began about fifteen billion years ago. Most cosmologists refer to the Big Bang as a "singularity," that is, an ultimate boundary or edge, a "state of infinite density" where space-time has ceased. Thus it represents an outer limit of what we can know about the universe since it is not possible to speculate, at least in the natural sciences, about conditions before or beyond the categories of space and time.

Nevertheless, in the past two decades some cosmologists have come to offer theories that account for the Big Bang itself as a fluctuation of a primal vacuum. Just as sub-atomic particles appear to emerge spontaneously in vacuums in laboratories, as the result of what is called "quantum tunneling from nothing," so the whole universe may be the result of a similar process. Other cosmologists, such as Stephen Hawking, contend that the notion of an initial "singularity" that seems to require a temporal beginning to the universe needs to be rejected. The universe, according to Hawking, does not have a boundary: "It is completely self-contained and not affected by anything outside itself." He thinks that the only way to have a scientific theory is if "the laws of physics hold everywhere, including at the beginning of the universe." For Hawking, contemporary quantum theory leads us to reject the very notion of such a privileged point as *the beginning* of the universe.

These recent variations in Big Bang cosmology have led some to wonder whether we are on the verge of a scientific explanation of the very origin of the universe. The contention of the new theories is that the laws of physics are sufficient to account for the origin and existence of the universe. If this be true, then, in a sense, we live in a self-creating universe that has sprung into existence spontaneously from a cosmic nothingness. Or, in Hawking's analysis, since the question of a beginning of the universe becomes meaningless, there is no role for a creator. As Quentin Smith, a philosopher of science, observes, if Big Bang cosmology is true "our universe exists without explanation. . . . It exists non-necessarily, improbably, and causelessly. It exists *for absolutely no reason at all.*"

In such a self-sufficient universe, exhaustively

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understood in terms of the laws of physics, it would seem that there is no room for the God of Jewish, Christian, or Muslim revelation. The advances of modern science threaten to render traditional doctrines of creation and its Creator as intellectual artifacts from a less enlightened age. Perhaps the God of traditional theology is but a hypothesis now shown to be unnecessary.

Too often contemporary discussions about the relationship between science and religion suffer from an ignorance of history, and our question is an example. For we can save God and natural theology from the dustbins simply by turning to the sophisticated analyses of the natural sciences and creation that took place during the age of High Scholasticism. In the thirteenth century, brilliant scholars such as Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas wrestled with the implications for Christian theology of the most advanced science of their day—namely, the works of Aristotle and his Muslim commentators, which had recently been translated into Latin. Following in the tradition of Muslim and Jewish thinkers, Aquinas developed an analysis of the doctrine of creation ex nihilo that remains one of the enduring accomplishments of Western culture. His analysis provides refreshing clarity for our often confused contemporary discussion of the relationship between science and religion.

It seemed to many of Aquinas' contemporaries that there was a fundamental incompatibility between the claim of ancient physics that something cannot come from nothing and the affirmation of Christian faith that God produced everything from nothing. Furthermore, for the Greeks, since something must come from something, there must always be something—the universe must be eternal.

Recent speculations that the universe began as "quantum tunneling from nothing" reaffirm the ancient Greek principle that you cannot get something from nothing. For the "vacuum" of modern particle physics, whose "fluctuation" some see as bringing our universe into existence, is not absolutely nothing. It is not anything like our present universe, but it still is something. Or else, how could it fluctuate?

An eternal universe seemed incompatible with a universe created ex nihilo, and so some medieval Christians thought that Greek science, especially in the person of Aristotle, ought to be banned, since it contradicted the truths of revelation. Aquinas, believing that the truths of science and the truths of faith could not contradict one another—God being the author of all truth—went to work to reconcile Aristotelian science and Christian revelation.

The key to Aquinas' analysis is the distinction he draws between *creation* and *change*. The natural sciences, whether Aristotelian or those of our own day, have as their subject the world of changing things: from sub-atomic particles to acorns to galaxies. Whenever there is a change there must be something that changes. The Greeks are right: from nothing, nothing comes; that is, if the verb "to come" means a change. All change requires an underlying material reality.

Creation, on the other hand, is the radical causing of the whole existence of whatever exists. To cause completely something to exist is not to produce a change in something, is not to work on or with some already existing material. If, in producing something new, an agent were to use something already existing, the agent would not by itself be the *complete* cause of the new thing. But such a complete causing is precisely what creation is. To create is to give existence, and all things are totally dependent upon God for the very fact that they are. God does not take nothing and make something out of "it." Rather, anything left entirely to itself, separated from the cause of its existence, would be absolutely nothing. Creation is not some distant event; it is the continuing, complete causing of the existence of everything that is. Creation, thus, is a subject for metaphysics and theology, not for the natural sciences.

Aquinas saw no contradiction in the notion of an eternal created universe. For, even if the universe had no temporal beginning, it still would depend upon God for its very being. There is no conflict between the doctrine of creation and any physical theory. Theories in the natural sciences account for change. Whether the changes described are biological or cosmological, unending or finite, they remain processes. Creation accounts for the existence of things, not for changes in things.

Aquinas did not think that the opening of Genesis presented any difficulties for the natural sciences, for the Bible is not a textbook in the sciences. What is essential to Christian faith, according to Aquinas, is the "fact of creation," not the manner or mode of the formation of the world. Aquinas' firm adherence to the truth of Scripture without falling into the trap of literalistic readings of the text offers valuable correction for exegesis of the Bible which concludes that one must choose between the literal interpretation of the Bible and modern science. For Aquinas, the literal meaning of the Bible is what God, its author, intends the words to mean. The literal sense of the text includes metaphors, similes, and other figures of speech useful to accommodate the truth of the Bible to the understanding of its readers. For example, when one reads in the Bible that God

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stretches out His hand, one ought not think that God has a hand. The literal meaning of such passages concerns God's power, not His anatomy. Nor ought one think that the six days at the beginning of Genesis literally refer to God's acting in time, for God's creative act is instantaneous.

Adhering to the traditional reading of Genesis and the doctrinal proclamation of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), Aquinas believed that the universe had a temporal beginning. Aristotle, he thought, was wrong to think otherwise. But Aquinas argued that, on the basis of reason alone, one could not know whether the universe is eternal. Furthermore, if there were an eternal universe it still would be a created universe. To affirm, on the basis of faith, that the universe has a temporal beginning involves no contradiction with what the natural sciences can proclaim, since on their own they leave this question unresolved. Hawking's denial of an absolute beginning to time, while also affirming a finite past, involves complicated speculation about quantum gravity, which itself remains not fully worked out. Regardless of the intelligibility of Hawking's scientific claims, the conclusions about creation he and others draw from them are false.

The Big Bang described by modern cosmologists is a change, not a creation; the natural sciences do not themselves provide an account for the ultimate origin of all things. Apologists for the Christian doctrine of creation ought not to think that the initial "singularity" of traditional Big Bang cosmology offers scientific confirmation of their view. Nor ought those who reject the doctrine of creation think that recent variations in Big Bang cosmology support their view. Even if the universe were the result of the fluctuation of a primal vacuum, it would not be a self-creating universe. The need to explain the existence of things does not disappear. Contrary to the claim that the universe described by contemporary cosmology leaves nothing for a creator to do, were a creator not causing all that is, there would be nothing done.

Aquinas would have no difficulty accepting Big Bang cosmology, even with its recent variations, while also affirming the doctrine of creation out of nothing. He would, of course, distinguish between advances in cosmology and the philosophical and theological reflections on these advances.

The variations in Big Bang cosmology I have mentioned are only theoretical speculations, and there are likely to be more of them. Their status as mere "speculations," however, does not justify their failure to distinguish among the domains of the natural sciences, metaphysics, and theology, nor their encroachment on nonscientific ground. Like the little boy mentioned at the outset, we are being told a great deal that is beside the point of our question. Thomas Aquinas did not have the advantage of the Hubble Space Telescope, but in many ways he was able to see farther and more clearly than those who do.

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The Self in Full

Elizabeth Powers

An autobiography is a strange beast. While it offers unique access to the inner life of an individual from the perspective of the only person capable of assessing it, it is problematic precisely because the self-knowledge of first-person narrators is problematic. Autobiography also posits a coherent, defined self which occupies a position from which to look back and evaluate the life. Yet, if we think about it at all, we are aware, being strangers in the cosmos, that every lived moment is simultaneously slipping into past time and rendering the notion of a stable self questionable. Walker Percy's observation in *Lost in the Cosmos* captures the enigma of self and self-knowledge:

> A stranger approaching you in the street will in a second's glance see you whole, size you up, place you in a way in which you cannot and never will, even though you have spent a lifetime with yourself . . . and therefore ought to know yourself best of all.

Augustine's *Confessions*, which gave birth to autobiography as a genre, enunciated and simultaneously solved these problems. Describing its author's life up until his conversion to Christianity, the *Confessions* grounds Augustine's individual, mutable life in the unchanging nature of God: "I entered into the depths of my soul, . . . and with the eye of my soul, such as it was, I saw the Light that never changes casting its rays over the same eye of my soul, over my mind."

For several years I taught Great Books classes to college undergraduates, and the European focus of the four-semester sequence (the first part was called "Roots of Western Thought") illuminated issues of which Augustine made the first consummate exploration: personal identity, individuality, the inviolable and incommensurate self. The status of these has in the meantime become so naturalized for us in the West that it scarcely dawns on anyone that they are the legacy of a vast spiritual inheritance 2,000 years in the making.

To make this point is to disagree with the subtitle of Harold Bloom's recent opus, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, which credits Shakespeare with the creation of the modern self. Stripped of much of its miasma, the book argues that Shakespeare "invented us (whoever we are)," that he gave us an abundance of "inner selves," and that since Shakespeare we constantly have to "reconceive" ourselves. Before Hamlet, "being human was much simpler for us but also rather less interesting."

Oscar Wilde, in an essay called "The Decay of Lying," made the same point, suggesting that the world has grown melancholy because a puppet named Hamlet was sad. But unlike the artists of whom Wilde wrote—who see the world through the brushstrokes of other painters until, via their own brushstrokes, they compel the world to reproduce the types they have invented—Bloom wants to claim that Shakespeare's invention of human types came from himself and himself only, from a "preternatural ability," without relying "on authority, or authorities."

That Shakespeare without any predecessors created human types who are themselves without precedent contradicts what we know about his work, namely, that nearly every line in it has its source in some other writing. Since Bloom knows this as well as anyone, his claim is part of a larger extravagance. To concede that Shakespeare stole from a hundred other writers, while managing to put his own imprint

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on that theft (Wilde's claim), would be to deny that Shakespeare was self-created. For ostensibly this secular God, after engendering himself, then brought the rest of us into being.

Bloom's purpose is to substitute art for the transcendent grounding that once gave coherence to the individual life, since "a universal and unifying culture, to any degree worthy of notice . . . cannot emanate from religion." As the postmodernists never stop reminding us, such modernist grounding is flimsy, being textual and artifactual. *The Invention of the Human* is laced with swipes at these spoilsports who, like Toto in Oz, would pull aside the curtain and reveal the chicanery of it all. I imagine that Bloom, like Augustine, is concerned with our ability to change and grow and maintain all the while an essential self. Yet his own language does not escape the baneful influence he decries. In speaking of the process of constant self-creation, of our continuing need to "reconceive ourselves"—a gift of the Bard to humans—he is echoing phrases that sprout from the lips of those who insist on a "multiplicity of subjective positions," "potential identities," and the like.

Self-creation, as David Novak argued in his review of Leon Wiesletier's *Kaddish* (FT, March), is "a powerfully Jewish statement, because atheism (being without God) is never a simple absence but, rather, a substitution of the true God with a false god. It is idolatry, in its modern form a monotheism in which the self is just as 'jealous' a god as the Lord God of Israel." Bloom's own review of Wieseltier's book, in the *New York Times*, is revealing in this connection: "One parts from Wieseltier with gratitude, but confirmed in a conviction he does not share, which is that the God of Akiba [ben Joseph], and of all the orthodoxies, always exacts too steep a price for the Sanctification of His name." Shakespeare, Bloom might have added, never exacts such a price.

When all is said and done, Shakespeare (or Goethe or Henry James or Proust—name your master) doesn't offer a religion—much less a "universal and unifying culture"—of which most people would care to be members, even if it would have them. It excludes those who don't have the right stuff, the right gifts, the right turn of phrase and wit and winking irony. Whatever the reason for the demise of elite culture, it was inevitable that modernism would collapse, like the paper house of fiction, into postmodernism. Postmodernism, in its attack on modernist hierarchies, is the reaction of barbarians—a contemporary acting-out of the sack of Rome.

Postmodernism also inelegantly reasserts what Augustine stated so eloquently sixteen centuries ago: that absent a transcendent grounding, the self never finds rest or, in contemporary terms, is torn between the Scylla of Tommy Hilfiger and the Charybdis of Ralph Lauren. In the world of texts (which, as Roland Barthes told us, includes our clothing), the status of the individual is uncertain. Such was the world depicted by Homer.

The *Odyssey* is a work I am fond of teaching. The ten-year journey home of its hero after a decade of fighting in Troy deals with important human themes, but the relation of man to the divine is at the very center of the story. The obstacles Odysseus encounters in returning to Ithaca are the result of having offended the god Poseidon, while his success comes only with the assistance of Athena, the gray-eyed goddess.

Odysseus' individuality—his acumen, his wit, his audacity, his strength, his love for his wife and son—makes the gods love him and reward him. The gods love those who are lovable. His crewmen, on the other hand, scarcely individualized except by their failings, are so much flotsam and jetsam in the service of highlighting his eminence. This is a universe indifferent to the interests of most men and women.

Socrates initiates a radical departure from such materialism into a realm of spirituality: each human, he avers, is inhabited by a soul, a conduit to the realm of eternal truths. Socrates introduced the art of reflection on one's character and even of one's ordinary activities in order to plumb their spiritual significance. Still, as we get into the *Phaedo*, particularly its claim for the soul's immortality, it dawns on several of my more thoughtful students that the body is merely the temporary repository of a soul that may go on to inhabit any number of other beings (even donkeys!) in the chain of transmigrations that Socrates describes. It is obvious that the unique personality that is Socrates is extinguished with death.

I recall the palpable relief an intellectually curious student named Rachel felt when we finally moved to the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle after all regards the soul as unique to the individual. But Rachel found something else in Aristotle, namely, a firm intellectual footing. She was clearly in no need of material footing: Rachel grew up in Vermont, the only child of a mother who was a doctor and a father who was a businessman. During school breaks she used to visit an uncle, a doctor employed by international relief organizations, in places like Guatemala. Rachel came from a very high-minded group of people, with the resources to accompany such high-mindedness.

For students like Rachel the *Ethics* is not a self-help book or a road map leading them in so many stages to achieving the good life. Rachel already lived the good life. What she lacked, like many of her contemporaries, was an intellectual articulation of her

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behavior. She is precisely the reader Aristotle had in mind, the person who already carries in her head a balance sheet of what is "right" and what is "wrong" and most always does the right thing.

The lack of a positive grammar with which to express ethical certainties applies equally to young people who are religious. Of those from the same social circumstances as Rachel, there is such defensiveness that, even if they are religious, they will seldom admit it. To follow Aristotle is one thing; but to be religious is tantamount to being countercultural, and never has there been a less rebellious group than today's undergraduates.

Another small segment of the student body does provide an exception. They are not upper middle class or even middle class but students from the most accidental of families, many of them minority students, kids who grow up in environments where people typically make bad choices. Knowing what is right, people choose wrong. Aristotle, who had such faith in the power of reason that he could not imagine an individual knowing what is right and failing to do it, nevertheless invented a term to describe such people. It was *akrasia* (incontinence, i.e., moral incontinence), from which our English word "crazy" derives.

As with Rachel, these students provide valuable insights, particularly to instructors who feel that certain works are too difficult for students to understand. One day, a girl named Jessica made the connection between herself and a work of literature that most of us are fortunate enough to make in comfortable circumstances, as I did, say, with the novels of Charlotte Brontë in high school. Jessica said she understood Dante's *Inferno* because she had lived it. She went on to tell about her childhood in the Bronx, about friends of hers who got hooked on heroin and other drugs, about the crimes people committed to feed their habits and other needs.

Jessica could have been just like them, but instead, as she said, Jesus found her, and she in turn found herself. She became not one of the lost ones, like the hapless and anonymous crewmen accompanying Odysseus, but the hero of her own story. Finding herself was not the rational process described by Aristotle but, like Rachel, she too "knows" what is right; she just can't tell you why.

It was the juxtaposition of these two sorts of students, the Jessicas and the Rachels of my college universe, that led me to contemplate our Western notions of selfhood, one the outcome of a reasoned quest for the Good, the other of an intimate and personal relation with an all-knowing God. Despite the fact that ordinary men and women have never had more resources for self-cultivation than at present, a glance around will confirm that Aristotle's program has failed to catch hold with most people. As my experience with students bears out, there is a danger these days that self-discovery is becoming the prerogative of the affluent and the otherwise advantaged.

Despite all that we owe to the Greeks and Romans, the ancient, pagan world seems not to have cared much about the individual as such. The greatest work of self-exploration in antiquity, Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, shows the effects of this lack of interest. Marcus Aurelius, emperor of Rome and a serious student of Stoic philosophy, was the embodiment of Socrates' philosopher-king. He began to compose his *Meditations* in A.D. 172, during tours of military duty in the Roman provinces. Though he reigned in a period of unrest, including the refusal of Christians to offer sacrifice to the official state gods, there is not a word in the *Meditations* about these current events.

A vivid contrast—and one that points up the shortcomings of philosophy as a guide to life—is provided by the writings of Julius Caesar. Caesar, too, was on the move, subduing the tribes of Gaul in the first century before Christ, when he composed *Commentarii de bello Gallico*. From this work, we know Julius Caesar as a man of action and keen observation, but not one of reflection. His activity, however, revealing his ambitions, his character, his physical and mental gifts, tells us much about him, which may be why he has had such a long run in popular imagination.

Marcus begins his *Meditations* by situating himself personally, naming his parents, relatives, tutors, and those who contributed to shaping his character. This enumeration brings out a felt recognition of his uniqueness as a person, but beyond this the *Meditations* cannot go. The remainder of the most articulate expression of personality in the ancient world is a soliloquy of a man seeking to efface his personality. For instance, from his brother Severus he learned "never to exhibit any symptom of anger or any other passion, but to be at the same time utterly impervious to all passions."

Marcus seems to be a man going through the motions. G. K. Chesterton called him "an unselfish egoist," one who does "not hate or love enough to make a moral revolution. He gets up early in the morning . . . because such altruism is much easier than stopping the games of the amphitheater." The body being for Marcus, as it was for Socrates, a philosophical tomb, how could he conceive of himself as an agent for good? Or even as an agent at all? While his reason led him to a distant apprehension of a creator, Marcus lacked knowledge of what that creator wanted of him. From this followed the inconse-

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quence of his own existence: "Realize of what Universe thou art a part, and as an emanation from what Controller of that universe thou dost subsist; and that a limit has been set to thy time, which if thou use not to let daylight into thy soul, it would be gone—and thou!—and never again shall the chance be thine." Got that?

How different from this godhead—or the capricious deity who barred Odysseus' return to Ithaca—is the majestic God of the Jews! While Marcus encountered the deafening silence of the spheres, David addressed his Maker with intimacy and assurance: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether."

God's will was not to be discerned in vatic pronouncements or the entrails of animals, and not, as with Marcus, in reliance on one's own reason. Instead, it manifested itself in human action. While the Socratic self-examination was self-serving, the Bible reveals the larger importance that acts of individual men and women can assume. For instance, the book of Exodus opens with a series of actions by women—midwives, a mother, a sister, the daughter of a pharaoh—each of which contributes to furthering God's plan for mankind.

In such circumstances, ordinary men became great men, all the while remaining manifestly human, with the many shortcomings such a condition implies. Though Homeric heroes seem also to be full-blooded individuals, Erich Auerbach, in his classic study *Mimesis,* makes this distinction between the Old Testament figures and Homeric heroes: the destiny of the latter, he writes, is clearly defined, and they "wake every morning as if it were the first day of their lives." The life of each of the Old Testament figures, on the other hand, has a cumulative trajectory. While Odysseus on his return to Ithaca is exactly the same as when he left two decades earlier, "what a road, what a fate, lie between the Jacob who cheated his father out of his blessing and the old man whose favorite son has been torn to pieces by a wild beast!"

It was in a period of philosophical and religious ferment, when the pagan gods failed to offer answers to the problems of ordinary life, that Christ came into the world and revealed God's salvific plan to all of mankind. In this new dispensation, the shaping of the inner life would not be limited by ethnic identification. Even though Jesus affirmed the law and the commandments, he called on men to abandon ties of family and clan (Matthew 19:29), even to abandon their natural inclinations: "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?" In place of all this, Jesus asked us to be reborn.

For most of us, of course, the world works on us so early and so variously that, by the time we begin to reflect on ourselves, there exists already, in John Henry Newman's words, a contrast between the promise and the condition of our being, a discrepancy that for Newman was proof that we are out of joint with the purposes of our Creator. The dilemma posed by Paul—"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do"—is one we have all faced.

However much we succeed in acting in the spirit of love that Jesus asked of us, we can still be torn apart by temptations, as anyone knows who has been obsessed about anything. In becoming man, Christ made the link between matter and spirit that most of us feel to be the truth about ourselves, even the atheists among us: our spirit strives toward what is noble and good, yet finds itself mired in what is paltry and second rate when not destructive of self and others. Held back by inner conflicts, we fail to be all we can be. We don't have to read Augustine to know that we enjoy feeling the pangs of sorrow and of being unloved.

Yet, in seeking to follow Jesus, in seeking to become all they could be, men discovered who they were. The depths of one's inner life—one's loves, hates, strengths, and weaknesses, all the obstacles one encounters in that search—became an object of interest. With that exploration we can begin to speak of the self-reflection of which spiritual autobiography is the preeminent literary expression. Spiritual autobiographies are accounts of the spiritual rebirth of which Jesus spoke. They tell of individuals, in their capacity as freely choosing beings, navigating their journey through a life of inferior rewards and temptations toward the discovery of who they were meant to be. Post-Homeric Greek culture, with its wealth of powerful artistic forms for the portrayal of human personality, never arrived at one that would explore the path to this intimate self-knowledge.

Jesus' early followers became new men suddenly and seemingly without psychic preparation: "And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' And they straightway left their net and followed him."

Something similar must have happened to many

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men and women in those early years. Aside from St. Paul, however, none of them has left us a record of their conversion. The first person to do so at length was Augustine, whose *Confessions*, written in the late fourth century, is regarded as the founding document of autobiography, spiritual and secular. In a certain respect, Augustine's presentation of his self-understanding merely extended the insights of the ancients, particularly the vital role of habit in psychic formation. As we grow into the world as infants, the exigencies of our physical nature lead us further and further away from the purity of soul suggested by baptism, while habitual responses gain the upper hand over our wish to follow the prompting of our higher nature. The self literally becomes divided, as Augustine recognized in trying to overcome his sexual compulsions: "The mind gives an order to the body and is at once obeyed, but when it gives an order to itself, it is resisted."

Through sheer force of will, Marcus Aurelius was able to suppress what were clearly vices. Yet in doing so, he suppressed any emotional vitality. His inability to achieve a felt, as distinct from a rationally understood, harmony with the divine resulted in a flatness of personality. Unlike Marcus, who hit on Stoicism and stayed with it, Augustine followed one intellectual or emotional chimera after another, including the philosophies of the pagan world. Augustine found himself turning in endless circles, falling deeper into despair, in his search for answers to his all-too-human condition. The way out of this dilemma occurred only after he realized that his will was so deformed by the strength of habit that, on his own, he did not have the power to change himself. Paradoxically, his freedom from his compulsions came only after turning to God, to Him who was outside of himself.

The *Confessions* describes a conversion experience, a radical turnaround. As Tolstoy wrote of his own conversion, "Everything that was on the right hand of the journey is now on the left." The encounter with God represents nothing short of a complete upheaval, a turbulent shaking down or even knocking down or breaking down of the self, accompanied by the emergence of a new and transformed self.

Amy Mandelker has drawn attention to the term "reverse perspective" as used by Russian Orthodox theologians to describe the unusual dimensions of icon paintings, with the gaze of the viewer drawn to the level of earthly events and yet given a peculiar perspective, as from a heavenly seat, so that people and objects do not have their expected everyday appearance. Similarly, Augustine prays, "O Lord, you were turning me around to look at myself. You were setting me before my own eyes."

An odd thing about the *Confessions* is that it was not imitated in the centuries immediately following its composition. Though it was copied and read in the Middle Ages, no one felt called upon to model his life story on it. In a period in which much emphasis was placed on the imitation of models, the absence of imitations of Augustine strikes me as extremely salient in our consideration of modern notions of individuality. After all, it was Augustine's narrative of spiritual blindness followed by illumination that became foundational for nonreligious self-presentation. Secular autobiography and the classic novel are unimaginable without the superior point of view of a narrator looking back on a life of errancy that will lead to a transformative experience, which will in turn produce self-understanding. The novel, drawing on Augustine's insights, transformed the individual's reliance on God into self-reliance and staged the hero's growth through a series of life-transforming experiences.

Thus we encounter an enlightened narrator, as in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* (consciously evoking Augustine in the title) or in Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield*, who reviews the past in order to show the events that have led to the present moment of wisdom. Literature aside, this is the point of view with which we, as moderns, also look upon our pasts as, say, a series of missteps that are constantly being corrected. In this, it is a case of "discovering" the self—a formulation that, in much attenuated form, can be heard among young people: who am I? what am I here for? To postmodern critics, such concerns suggest that life has a "plot," as in a well-crafted novel, but of course what they are really pointing out is that such issues have no meaning in the absence of a transcendent grounding.

One might conclude that Augustine had grasped and articulated an awareness of individuality that thereafter went underground for centuries. Yet as Caroline Bynum has pointed out, personal exploration in the Middle Ages followed the powerful model provided by religious orders. Thus, in the twelfth century, spiritual growth strove toward likeness to a chosen model, e.g., Franciscan poverty. By the sixteenth century—the age of Shakespeare—a well-established tradition of self-examination existed, as is evident from the many guides to the spiritual life for those who would assay it. Amid these splendid fruits, some are programmatic (Ignatius Loyola), some are personal (Teresa of Ávila), some are literary, philosophical, and meditative at once (John of the Cross, Sor Inés de la Cruz).

That century seems to represent the culmination of a process that began with the first fishermen to follow Jesus. It was at this moment of common faith

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and common baptism—akin to the union of spirituality and ethnicity in Judaism—that the ecclesiastical unity was fractured. At the same time, the Reformation struck a blow to the corporate religious life and the personal exploration encouraged within its structures.

This was the same period in which Europe was startled awake from centuries of economic slumber. The multiplication of religious denominations in successive centuries can be viewed as the first products of commodification, in this case of the spiritual life. In turn, the social mobility arising from the new market conditions—both upward and downward or across the seas—presented people with unprecedented life challenges. And, with increasing literacy, ordinary individuals began to have what had once been a more restricted prerogative, the exploration in writing of the inner life. Soon we see an eruption of spiritual autobiographies, mainly written by Pietists, Puritans, and Quakers.

They portray a life of inner blindness leading to illumination and conversion. They situate their stories in settings as vivid as were Carthage and Rome in the *Confessions*. Their narrators struggle with a variety of worldly lures and intellectual fashions not unlike those with which Augustine wrestled in the vibrant world of the late Roman empire but that were unknown to those going through their daily rounds within the cloister walls of medieval Europe. Indeed, one cannot help but feel that these writers are "individuals" in a sense with which we are very familiar. By the eighteenth century, Europe is also a decidedly familiar place. However central religious discourse and habits of life remain in the surrounding culture, alienation and isolation begin to characterize the spiritual seeker. This alienation is reflected in the existential uncertainties of a man as deeply pious as Samuel Johnson; or it can be seen in Mary Margaret Alacoque, immersed in a cloistered religious life. As we approach the nineteenth century and the marginalization of religious discourse, individuality and isolation increase.

This is as true of believers—say, John Henry Newman or Christina Rossetti—as it is of a nonbeliever like John Stuart Mill. In Mill's case, one also senses a strong element of sheer will, almost as intense as in Marcus Aurelius. Mill, like Marcus, viewed history as a play of vast forces, marching onward forever, though Man now occupied God's superior vantage point and was channeling those forces in a progressive direction. This more optimistic assessment speaks to the major difference between the two: Mill inherited a well-developed tradition of thinking and writing about the self, one that, by his time, took for granted the coherence of personality and world. This tradition had become so naturalized that Mill was willing to jettison the laboriously accumulated repository of spiritual capital on which his brand of liberalism depended for its continued existence.

Perhaps the best way to understand what spiritual autobiographies do is to contrast them with recent first-person autobiographical narratives. What the former make evident—and here the parallel with Aristotelian cultivation of the inner life is illuminating—is how arduous is the path of the spiritual seeker. Not for nothing did John Bunyan speak of the "Slough of Despond" and "Doubting-Castle." The obstacles, even when depicted as outward ones in such allegories, are nevertheless understood as internal. Like Augustine, these narrators regard deformation as self-chosen and the liberation from it as transformative.

While spiritual autobiographies appeal to deeper truths, contemporary autobiography dwells on what Freud termed the "manifest" content of things. In this, individual shortcomings play little role, not to mention the need for inner effort in overcoming or transforming them. Instead, what began with Rousseau has become a fixed tendency, with the focus on travail imposed from outside, by parents, environment, and so on. As Gertrude Himmelfarb has written, in place of the "confession (à la Augustine) of one's own faults and sins," it is today "more often a 'confession' of the faults and sins of others—of parents, lovers, friends, associates, or, if need be, of society at large." Blame is correspondingly harsh, suggesting the subjective judgment of a child who has no faith in a parent who loves, deals with mercy, and is just. In their employment of considerable fantasy—I am thinking now of those that expose childhood sexual abuse and the like—these narratives resemble fairy tales told in the first person. But while fairy tales may help children to resolve inner conflicts and to mature, contemporary autobiographies document the failure to achieve human wholeness. Hence the postmodern decentered, fluctuating vision of man.

To describe a work as an autobiography merely because of the first-person pronoun effaces what distinguishes autobiography: the belief in the existence of a stable self and the meaningfulness of human action. As humans we are caught in contingencies of all sorts. We juggle in ourselves a host of contradictory tendencies. Yet it was once believed—certainly when Mill wrote his *Autobiography*—that, whatever our familial, religious, racial, or physical limitations, our actions have meaning because they are embedded in a scheme of things larger than just our immediate bodies. Now, meaning is said to reside in our wardrobes, and is just as disposable.

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Edith Wharton, in a 1934 essay on Marcel Proust, wrote that his "traditional world was still essentially a Christian and a Catholic one; the moral and intellectual conflicts arising in such a society alone seemed to him worth recording. It is this which divides him from his successors in the pathetically shrunken field of his art." Proust, she went on, is "all in depth; and he will have to wait for full recognition till the surface of life is once more discovered to be of interest only in proportion to its inner significance." Wharton's perception of the crucial import of Proust's Christian inheritance for his analysis of character goes to the heart of things. There can be inner significance only when a human life is felt to be, well, significant.

The first articulation of this significance is found in the Old Testament—the ideal of personal holiness, the concern for the poor and the needy, the equitable relation that was to exist in criminal matters. Nothing of the sort exists in any previous body of law, say, the Babylonian code. The observation of the sabbath, referred to numerous times in Exodus, solemnizes a profoundly new order of human relations. Christ came into the world to extend this order to all people. Heeding the words of Paul—"in Christ there is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Greek, male nor female"—generation upon generation, impeded often by formidable circumstances, succeeded in strengthening in men's minds the significance of the divine order of the world and, within that order, of the individual.

Great minds since the eighteenth century have sought to make the self free-standing or to anchor it to art or to a variety of political theories. In doing so, they have succeeded in squandering an immense spiritual inheritance, arduously accumulated since antiquity, that gives substance to the self and makes it whole. Is it any wonder that this legacy, the source of which can be traced back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, should now be anathematized as "patriarchy" by those hoping to usher it off the stage of history? FT

Down Their Luck

Not the syndrome of the child
manifesting later than usual
that bothered parents
rich enough for
any special
care

but
reflection
on their own
faces and brains
too poor to cope with
an arduous learning process.

For fifteen years a near angel
taught them how hard one
has to work for wings;
then in a flap of
heart she was
flown.

T. Kretz

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Sex, Naturally

Joseph B. Stanford

When I entered medical school at the University of Minnesota in 1984 I did not know that fifteen years later, as an academic family physician, I would be fully committed to promoting an understanding of human sexuality and procreation radically at odds with the prevailing views and practices of our contemporary culture. I have found that medicine is permeated with attitudes toward sexuality and fertility that are incompatible with Christian values of the sanctity of life, marriage, and procreation, attitudes that both reflect and perpetuate the recreational approach to sexuality found in our secular culture. Based on personal experience, experience with patients, my own research, and the research and wisdom of others, I am persuaded that there is a spiritually authentic and scientifically sound approach to human sexuality and procreation that is largely lacking in medicine today, but that is essential to restoring full respect for human life in our culture.

Perhaps my first direct encounter with secular doctrine on sexuality in medicine was a required weekend "human sexuality attitude reassessment" seminar. Part of that course included several hours of hard-core pornographic films, used to "broaden" students' perspectives on human sexuality. In considering whether I should attend this seminar, I prayed and counseled with my church leaders, an approach that has helped me steer through many issues since that time. Along with a few other classmates, I opted out of that weekend seminar by writing a paper on my personal attitudes on human sexuality and how they would affect the care I would give patients who had attitudes different from mine. This helped me clarify my thoughts on how I could be true to my belief in the sacredness of human sexuality and the value of chastity while providing compassionate care to patients who may not have such beliefs. I began to learn how to treat all patients with full human respect, including those who make choices that I consider to be immoral.

During pharmacology class in medical school we were taught that hormonal contraception ("the pill," and other forms), which does not always prevent ovulation, alters the endometrium in such a way as to reduce the probability of implantation in the womb of newly formed human life. A small group of us in the medical school class decided that because of this, we would not prescribe hormonal contraceptives. Those that made this commitment included a Catholic, a Baptist (both women), and myself, a Latter-day Saint (LDS). I don't know for sure about my classmates, but I have stuck with that decision throughout my training and practice, and it has opened the way for me to give much to my patients that otherwise I might never have been able to offer.

The potential of hormonal contraception to act after conception offers an interesting study in contrasts in modern medicine. Despite being acknowledged in most standard gynecologic and pharmacologic texts, it is unknown to most physicians, and is ignored in almost all literature on contraception that patients receive. The evidence that hormonal contraception acts in this way is not definitive, but it is strongly suggestive. Patients should be told of it under the principle of informed consent. Women and their husbands need to have the best available medical information in order to make decisions about family planning that are in accord with their own values and moral conscience.

Learning that the pill could act as an abortifacient was the beginning of my questioning the value of contraceptives. During my residency training in

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family medicine, I avoided doing tubal ligations or vasectomies because of official statements by LDS church leaders strongly discouraging these procedures. I came to recognize that fertility is a part of health, not a disease, and that there is something fundamentally contradictory about doing a surgery to impede a healthy function of the body. Over time and experience with patients, I began to think that any form of contraception had detrimental effects on marriages and even nonmarital relationships, although not everyone recognized them. Based on a growing understanding that sexuality and fertility are linked at the most fundamental level both physically and spiritually, I began to see more clearly what can happen when man tries to undo this connection.

Sexual union in marriage ought to be a complete giving of each spouse to the other, and when fertility (or potential fertility) is deliberately excluded from that giving I am convinced that something valuable is lost. A husband will sometimes begin to see his wife as an object of sexual pleasure who should always be available for gratification. This tendency is reinforced by the dominant perspective on sexuality in our society, which idealizes unlimited sexual titillation and gratification freed (at least theoretically) from any consideration of pregnancy. Sterilization and hormonal contraceptives especially feed into this prevalent and highly distorted male perspective (which is also adopted by many women). Couples can also easily lose sight of why they have made a decision to avoid pregnancy and then not discuss the issue for months or even years, developing an approach to their sexual relationship largely divorced from even the thought of procreation. There are also medical side effects of greater or lesser nature with every contraceptive. Within a couple of years, I came to the decision that I could not in conscience prescribe contraceptives of any sort (whether or not they are abortifacient), because I felt that on at least some level, all contraception is detrimental to marriage and to the health of the spouses.

I would not have been able to make a decision not to prescribe contraception had I not simultaneously learned of an effective, scientifically sound, and spiritually healthy approach for family planning. There are simple, accurate ways to monitor and interpret the signs of fertility in a woman's body. Couples can learn to use these signs of fertility to plan conception by intercourse during the fertile time, or to space births by genital abstinence during the fertile time.

The primary fertility signs are: 1) the changes in vaginal discharge around the time of ovulation that correspond to the secretions from the uterine cervix that allow the sperm to survive and move about, and 2) the rise in basal body temperature, which is a marker that ovulation has occurred. With proper instruction, these signs can be reliably interpreted independent of the calendar, regardless of whether a woman's cycles are regular or irregular. In fact, these basic physiologic phenomena of human fertility have applications that go far beyond being simply a method of family planning "naturally," i.e., without contraceptives. Nevertheless, because the term "natural family planning" (NFP) has been widely used to describe the basic understanding of the cycles of fertility and infertility of a woman's body, in addition to its application for spacing pregnancies, in this essay I will refer to all applications of this knowledge under that rubric.

Three modern methods of NFP are supported by a strong body of scientific data: 1) the *sympto-thermal method*, based on observations of vaginal discharge and basal body temperature, sometimes combined with other symptoms; 2) the *ovulation method*, also know as the *Billings ovulation method* after Drs. John and Evelyn Billings, based solely on observations of vaginal discharge; and 3) the *Creighton Model System*, an adaptation of the ovulation method with standardized protocols for use and teaching, developed at Creighton University. Each of these methods has a strong base of medical studies demonstrating high effectiveness in avoiding pregnancy.

Couples who have a serious need to space pregnancies or to avoid pregnancy altogether can reliably do so by using NFP. Many (perhaps most) couples face such situations during some seasons in their marriage. If there were no effective alternative to contraception (other than complete abstinence) to avoid conception, this would seem a hard bind indeed.

The periodic abstinence used in NFP to avoid pregnancy can be challenging, even at times very difficult, but it strengthens marriages as both spouses put the needs of the other—and their marriage—ahead of their own needs. It takes faith to use NFP: if not faith in God, then at least faith in the strength of one's marital relationship and in the good will and ability of each spouse to yield to the gentle discipline of NFP for the common good of their marriage and family.

This faith is well rewarded: there is a strong "courtship/honeymoon" effect among NFP users, even after years of marriage. Abstinence from genital contact during the fertile phase evokes a sense of periodic "courtship," after which the couple enjoys a periodic "honeymoon" that increases the appreciation and enjoyment of the sexual union. Available research suggests that the overall frequency of inter-

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course among married couples using NFP is about the same as among most married couples using contraception, but that it is distributed differently. I have known couples in my practice using contraception who routinely have daily intercourse, but these couples do not have anywhere near as satisfying a "sex life" as those couples I see who use NFP. Simply put, NFP enhances marriages in a way that the use of contraception does not.

I find that the following benefits come to those couples who use NFP: 1) they come to a deeper appreciation of fertility as a gift from God rather than a biological phenomenon to be manipulated or a curse to be avoided; 2) they are usually able to consciously and rapidly achieve pregnancy when they so choose ("surprise" pregnancies are rare for NFP users); 3) they reevaluate their choices about fertility on an ongoing basis; 4) in their intimate relationship, each spouse sends to the other the implicit and powerful message: "I accept all of you, including your fertility"; 5) they learn to assume and to exercise joint responsibility for decisions about their fertility; 6) they learn that times of abstinence from genital contact can strengthen their relationship.

Most people who start to use NFP do not do so because they expect to experience the benefits to their relationship and spirituality that I have just described. Research suggests that a majority are initially interested primarily for the health benefits—the absence of medical side effects and the insight into the normal functioning of the body. Others begin use of NFP because of a prior religious commitment. Regardless of the reason for beginning use of NFP, most research has shown that, compared to other family planning methods, a relatively high proportion of users continue to use it. And after some months of use, most users will tell you that they have noticed some of the benefits to their relationships that I have described.

The fundamental distinction between NFP and contraception becomes clearer when couples who are using NFP to avoid pregnancy try to conceive. For couples who are contracepting, choosing to conceive usually means discontinuing the contraceptive (or using it erratically and inconsistently) and "taking chances" or "seeing what happens." While some users of NFP may occasionally employ this language, their experience is qualitatively different. Unlike most contracepting couples, they know very well when they are likely to conceive, whether or not they are deliberately "planning" to do so. They have a level of understanding about fertility, with its attendant privileges and responsibilities, that is simply unavailable to the couple that relies on contraception for family planning.

This understanding has the potential to profoundly inform the couple's appreciation of the divine power of procreation. Unlike contraception, NFP does not encourage the minimization of the number of offspring. Quite the contrary. While NFP does enable couples with serious considerations to avoid pregnancy reliably, it also encourages couples to have as many children as they can reasonably care for. Seen from a Christian perspective, this is a distinct advantage of NFP that is shared by no other family planning method. NFP is by its very nature open to life.

I do not mean to imply that married couples who use contraception will necessarily have marital or family problems. I know many wonderful couples who are very open to life, are completely committed to their families, and yet also use contraception. Yet I remain convinced that many of these couples would switch to NFP if they had the opportunity to really understand it and the additional blessings it bestows.

There are two other dimensions of NFP that I can only briefly touch on here, but that are of equal importance to its value to space births. The first is the strong hope that NFP offers couples who struggle with infertility. NFP is the foundation for an approach to infertility that is based on restoring the natural, God-given processes of human reproduction to their healthy functioning. This stands in radical contrast to most of the high-tech efforts in infertility today, which treat human life as an object to be manipulated scientifically rather than as a sacred reality. Many couples and physicians come to rely on in vitro fertilization and related procedures because of their laudable desire for fertility, only to find themselves facing unexpected moral dilemmas such as what to do with cryo-preserved embryos. The "natural procreative" approach to infertility, which can even incorporate sophisticated medical and surgical techniques as long as they are used to restore the normal physiology of fertility, is based on a respect for the processes of human procreation and for human life at its earliest stages.

Rigorous data on the effectiveness of the natural procreative approach (which receives virtually no research funding at present) have yet to be compiled, but I am persuaded by available data that it will prove to be at least as effective as the present medical approaches to infertility. (The Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction in Omaha, Nebraska, is leading the way in developing the "natural procreative technology" approach to infertility.) This application of NFP will probably be the first to break into the mainstream of reproduc-

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tive medicine. Even so, it will encounter stiff opposition from those who are invested in the currently prevailing system for medically treating infertility.

Another essential contribution of NFP is the superior approach it offers to women's gynecologic and reproductive health. A knowledge of when and whether a woman is ovulating, and when and whether her reproductive system is functioning normally, is of great value in diagnosing and treating conditions that relate to the reproductive system, such as premenstrual syndrome, irregular vaginal bleeding, endometriosis, and ovarian cysts. By far the most common way that physicians currently treat all of these common conditions, with variable success in controlling symptoms, is by placing women on birth control pills or other hormonal treatments that suppress the normal functioning of the reproductive system. In contrast, NFP offers the prospect of developing medical treatments that will restore normal functioning of the reproductive system. Further, NFP helps women understand their bodies more thoroughly, allowing them to participate as equal partners in any medical treatment. In my own practice, I see a qualitative difference in treating women for any of these conditions who are using (or who begin to use) NFP to understand their cycles, and those who do not. Research will develop a much greater realization of the potential of this approach in the future.

As good as current methods are for identifying the time of fertility during the menstrual cycle, I believe that we will develop more complete and effective approaches in the future. A few couples still have substantial difficulties learning to interpret their fertility signals. However, I have found that when couples that encounter these difficulties are given the best possible medical and moral support, they usually stick with their choice to use NFP, and are able to come through such difficult times with a stronger marriage for it.

Less than 1 percent of all couples in the U.S. use modern NFP. Why not more? The issues include lack of understanding, lack of access on multiple levels, a culture that is saturated in contraception, and intrinsic issues of trust. In addition, there is a minority who perceive NFP as "natural contraception" and who therefore reject it along with contraception.

In a culture where one is statistically unlikely to know anyone who uses modern NFP, it is hard to get accurate information about it, much less social support for using it. Effective use of NFP requires adequate instruction, which needs to be provided by a trained teacher. The number of NFP teachers available varies geographically, but is still very limited in most places. Insurance companies do not reimburse couples for professional health services related to NFP to the extent that they do for contraception or sterilization, though this is slowly changing. Physicians and health professionals are widely uninformed (or misinformed) about modern NFP, and usually they do not even discuss the option with patients. I first learned about NFP not through my classes, but through an optional noontime lecture series organized by medical students to cover items not addressed in our medical school curriculum. Most medical schools and continuing medical education programs lack adequate and accurate information about NFP.

Contraception has become such an integral part of medical practice that it is difficult for those medical students or physicians who decide not to prescribe it to be allowed to complete their training, and in the field of obstetrics and gynecology it is almost impossible. I do not attribute this to any conspiracy, but to the cultural acceptance and promotion of contraception of the past nearly thirty years. In this regard, one should not underestimate the influence and role of pharmaceutical companies in the widespread prescription of contraception by health professionals, since they are perhaps the single greatest source of funding for continuing medical education and professional journals in obstetrics and gynecology.

At any rate, the lack of use of NFP is not because most women or couples are intrinsically satisfied with modern contraceptive methods. Relatively few women really enjoy the physical experience of being on the pill or other hormonal contraceptives, with their assorted side effects, common and uncommon. I have not met any women who really enjoy having to put in a diaphragm, nor men who would prefer to put on a condom in order to have intercourse. Research has demonstrated that many women and men are looking for something better.

I do not presume in any way to judge others (particularly my patients) when they choose to use contraceptives. Their choices about their reproductive potential are between themselves and God, and it is their right and responsibility to determine for themselves what they will do about their fertility. In discussions with patients, I strive to be balanced in discussing my medical assessments of various contraceptive methods. At the same time, in a nonjudgmental way, I try to convey to patients, to the degree that they are ready to hear it, why I think that there is a healthy and effective alternative that is in full harmony with their fertility and with who they are as human persons, as children of God. I clearly

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let them know what I can and cannot do within my own conscience, and that they will need to go elsewhere if they choose an option in which I cannot participate. Almost all of my patients are quite understanding of this. Those who do end up choosing to use prescription contraception nearly always return to me for the rest of their medical care. I have found that approximately one-fourth of my patients who did not previously use NFP choose to do so after having a detailed discussion with me. (On the other hand, many of my patients come to me because they are seeking a physician who will support their prior choice to use NFP.)

In addition to many family physicians, there is a growing number of obstetrician-gynecologists who have made the decision to prescribe only NFP for birth spacing, infertility, and most or all remaining aspects of reproductive health. I have become very involved in the work of the American Academy of Natural Family Planning, an organization committed to professional service and research within a moral framework of full respect for life and procreation. I have served as chairman of the science and research committee, and recently as president. The fact that I am one of few non-Catholic members of that organization has not hindered my deep friendship and common purpose with these faithful health professionals.

I am often asked by my Catholic friends about the stance of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on contraception. There are very few recent statements from LDS church authorities explicitly on the subject of contraception, but statements by church leaders have made very clear the following relevant doctrinal points: 1) Human life is sacred from the moment of conception. 2) Chastity is of central importance both outside and inside marriage. 3) Marriage is a cornerstone of God's plan for humankind. 4) There is a divinely mandated and inseparable link between sexuality and procreation. 5) The body is a sacred gift from God and a central part of the purpose for our earthly life. 6) The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. 7) It is vitally important that we do nothing that would harm or injure the health or normal function of the body. 8) In this mortal life we need to search out, learn, and live by the laws that govern our earthly lives. 9) The first commandment given to married couples to multiply and replenish the earth is still valid. 10) Children are "an heritage of the Lord," the Lord's blessings to a married couple. 11) Family life is where the greatest blessings of life are found. 12) Each husband must be respectful of his wife's health and well-being. 13) Parents must carefully seek divine inspiration to plan for and care for their families. 14) Self-control and mutual respect are vitally important components of the marriage relationship.

A recent proclamation on the family by the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church states:

> The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for his children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and its importance in God's eternal plan.

To me, all of these doctrines in their fullness completely support the appropriateness of using NFP within marriage. It is possible for a couple to use NFP in an inappropriate way to selfishly limit their family, but, in my opinion, this is much less likely to happen with NFP than it is with the use of artificial methods of contraception.

Of course I have become quite familiar with Catholic perspectives on these issues. I have read and reread *Humanae Vitae*, the 1968 encyclical of Pope Paul VI. Although there are some theological points in it with which I disagree, I find myself in complete agreement with the fundamental vision of human sexuality and family life that it beautifully sets forth. I believe that the insights of that encyclical could only have come from divine inspiration. Similarly, though I cannot agree with every detailed point of Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium Vitae*, I find his vision of the battle between the Culture of Life and the Culture of Death very illuminating.

The strongest resistance to NFP will probably remain concentrated among those who believe that population control is the most critical issue of our time, because they correctly sense that NFP is not as "reliable" as many methods of contraception from the perspective of encouraging people not to have children. As I have noted, the deepest inroads for NFP into mainstream medicine will probably come initially from its potential to help couples with infertility. Eventually, I hope to see the majority of health professionals in the United States come to accept NFP as an option that should be available to all women and couples. Even those who are committed to contraception and countenance abortion could

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support this additional "choice." There are an increasing number of health professionals who promote the health benefits of NFP while still seeing NFP as essentially one of many methods of contraception, whatever its advantages might be. Many of these promote a version of fertility awareness that encourages the use of barrier methods of contraception (or other variations such as oral sex) during the fertile time—a version that maintains some health benefits of NFP but loses its spiritual benefits.

The ultimate value of NFP will be found by those who approach sexuality in faith. They will come to realize that NFP differs fundamentally from contraception in that it cooperates with the divine gift of fertility, rather than seeking to suppress or destroy it, and that cooperating with the divine gift of fertility brings spiritual blessings as well as medical benefits. NFP restores the connection between sex and procreation, enhances marriage, and supports the virtue of chastity. It helps spouses see each other as persons and creators of persons—appropriately enough, because it is in procreation that people become most aware of their status as children made in the image of their Father. FT

Saint Margaret of Cortona

Nine years she flaunted
her lover on the streets of Montepulciano,
then rode high on his costly stallions,
their illegitimate son cradled against her hips
on that jewel-studded saddle.

On her ripe lips, the town was a sweet fruit,
the woods the dark rind she sucked nightly.
What did she know then of the oak's alluring and sad embrace,
that ominous fall of autumn in which her cavalier rode off?

Only his dog returned, sniffing out his bloodied master,
murdered and mangled beneath a tree's dead arms.
She saw assassins everywhere
in God's bright eyes.
The moon was the howl of vengeance,
and she listened.

With a noose about her neck
and her child in her arms,
she stepped barefooted and weeping
toward the Cortona convent.

Where is the clock of forgiveness
in our sadly mortal bodies,
the thorn that ticks our last minutes
toward an hour of understanding?

For twenty-nine years,
she scrubbed the defiled wounds of the poor,
hugged a hair-shirt of penance to her aging breasts,
punctured her body for the world's harlotries.
Only then, prostrate and bleeding before a crucifix,
did she begin to see: Christ moving toward her,
his gashed palm raised mercifully in peace.

Marjorie Maddox

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Return of the Gods

Hannes Stein

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God swept over the face of the waters like a whirlwind. And God said, Let there be light! and there was light.

But the light was young and helpless and weak: and though God divided it from the darkness, this division was barely perceptible to human eyes. God's light did not shine, it flickered; with difficulty it oscillated between boundless black and infinite gray. It was not an aureole but a distant, hazy, tired glow.

And dark superstition governed men's heads and fear tyrannized their thoughts: for the world was a place full of magic. Every hill was holy land owned by the ancestral spirits. Each tree accommodated a spirit who was gazing after the traveler. A smirking demon squatted in every bush and demanded his toll. The eagle who circled high up in the air was a supreme being. In the mountains dwelt giants who hurled bolts of lightning and thunder. In the oceans lived monsters whose names it was forbidden to utter. There was fear everywhere—pagan fear.

Indeed the people of these prehistoric times lived in a state of constant angst. They were terrified of committing a capital offense; they were terrified of the chaos of nature. The universe seemed sinister to them and full of threats. At every turn the wood nymphs, pixies, and demon-gods demanded to be appeased and begged for forgiveness. As long as one was awake one risked violating a taboo.

Sometimes caution was not enough, for the higher beings were malicious. Then a specialist was called in for advice: the shaman, the witch doctor. He knew the gods face to face and had command of their language. His eagle's mask gave him superhuman powers. Without let or hindrance he ran between heaven, earth, and underworld. Masterly the shaman played the manual of feelings: sometimes he alleviated the pagan fears that plagued his fellow tribesmen, sometimes he whipped them up. His costume, showing a skeleton made of metal bones, was visible proof that once he had already been dead. Evil spirits had torn him apart and drunk his blood. Afterwards the tribal totem beasts had eviscerated him and supplanted his bowels by magic substances. Finally the spirits had put him together again piece by piece like a puppet. Through his death, the shaman had become one with the horrid universe. Through his voice the nature gods screeched, screamed, shrieked, and hissed.

He was a powerful man. On his drum he flew straight to the tree-of-nine-branches that connected heaven, earth, and the realm of the dead. By the beginning of the bronze age, however, his magic powers were suddenly no longer sufficient. Then it became clear that there were gods more powerful and terrifying than the others: man began worshiping the stars. The priest came to the shaman's aid with the slaughtering knife in his fist and human sacrifice on his mind.

This was still true for the Aztecs, who had erected a great empire in Mexico by means of genocide. Theirs was a deeply pessimistic religion: they believed that the sun and the moon had appeared in the sky by a fiery self-sacrifice of the gods. More gods had given their lives in order to set the celestial bodies into motion. This was a debt the human race now had to redeem by sacrificing some of its own. According to the Aztec faith, the world had perished and been reborn four times already. Another cataclysm could be deferred only as long as human blood was flowing in broad rivers. Should the stream

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of blood ever run dry, the sun would not rise the next morning.

If an enemy fell into the Aztecs' hands, he might be lucky and be selected for a special fate. In this case he would be accepted into his captor's family and be treated as an honored guest. On a set date he would be accompanied to an elevated platform and slowly slashed to death by four splendid warriors. The longer his agony lasted, the greater his glory. The festival reached its climax when an Aztec priest skillfully cut his heart out of his chest and held the bleeding, beating muscle into the light. After this the victim was skinned, and his captor wore his skin until it was decayed completely.

The Aztecs were not exceptionally cruel; and only a fool would call them uncivilized or barbarian. For human sacrifice was precisely what defined the advanced civilizations—not only in America but also in the Middle East. Thus the Canaanites threw children into fiery furnaces to please Moloch; the Egyptians worshiped the sun and the goddess Hathor "who in the darkness crushes blood as if it were mash"; the Assyrians and Babylonians built the first cities around enormous slaughterhouses where priests sang praise to the stars before they cut the throats of well-built young men. How could the Israelites with their nomadic ancestor Abraham compete with this? The Philistines, by comparison a civilized race, prostrated themselves before their fish-god Dagon. They were immigrants from Crete, where the celestial bull demanded the lives of a dozen virgins every year.

Human sacrifices were no cause for shame. They were not performed discreetly in a clandestine cellar but on top of a pyramid, in the temple, in front of a crowd. Lo and behold, we are prepared to give what is most dear to us! Look, we do not even spare our children! So voracious were the star gods. So great was the fear of the pagans. And thus it could have gone on forever according to the eternal cycle of nature, accompanied by the howl of shamans, the singsong of priests, and the roar of the slaughtered.

But on the fourth day God put the sun and the moon in the firmament of heaven, and He made the stars also: to divide the day from the night and for signs and for seasons and for days and years. There and then the world was enlightened. Henceforth the mortals no longer were to serve the stars—quite the opposite: God had hung them in His firmament for their benefit. The celestial bodies that made all the civilized peoples tremble were nothing but lamps and watches! This was an unheard-of provocation, unprecedented chutzpah. Genesis begins with a blasphemy: a slander, that is, against the gods.

This blasphemy marked the end of pagan fear. For when the mighty star gods lost their influence, the minor gods, too, began their retreat into nothingness. Henceforth one could without punishment cross every hill God had drained on the second day of creation. No demons dwelled in the trees and bushes that He had planted on the third day. The eagle who had sailed the sky since the fifth day was no longer a supreme being. The mermaids, fairies, and demons vanished with a silent shout of fury. Thus the demystification of the heavens entailed a radical disenchantment of the world. God's earth suddenly became very wide: man could move about on its surface without superstition. And God saw that it was good.

But was it? As yet nobody (barring a small nation at the outskirts of the Arabian desert) knew that the idols had lost their power: this gospel had not radiated into the wide world. Only a few Greek philosophers dared whisper that the gods were nothing—that they were wooden statues decked with sheet metal that must be borne by human hand. The others, the silent majority, remained dumb and superstitious. Clearly, God needed a messenger.

He found him by using a time-tested method. Half a millennium ago God had called by name a certain Jeremiah "before He formed him in the womb." Now, too, He singled out one of his sons before he came into being and entrusted him with a special mission: He made him a *navi lagoyim*, a prophet to the pagan nations.

The journeys of this emissary ploughed the Mediterranean world in a bizarre zigzag. On his way he wrote letter after letter, grumbling, breathless, impatient: "Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren." He was a tentmaker, a middle-class entrepreneur. However, he was convinced that in a short while history would come to an end. In these last, messianic days, the Hebrew Bible taught, all the nations would turn towards the One God of Israel. Paul thought he had been hand-picked to help this prophecy come true.

How did he disseminate his message? Did he really stand in the marketplace, as the New Testament would have us believe, and start preaching in the name of his messiah Jesus? It seems more likely that he went to the synagogues. There he would enter

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into conversations with Greek and Roman intellectuals, many of whom were seriously interested in Judaism: those for whom the pagan cults had become meaningless visited Jewish services instead. They listened to scriptural reading in the vernacular and to the great merriment of their fellow heathens kept the sabbath. Such intellectuals were considered sons and daughters of Noah by the Jews. They were not circumcised, did not count as members of the community, and could not be called to read from the Torah. They were "righteous among the nations," to be sure, but they remained pagans.

Among such Noahides (as they were called) Paul propagandized for his messiah. And this was his offer: you can become full-fledged members of the Chosen Nation instantly if you believe that Jesus was the savior who died for you on the gallows. You need not get yourselves circumcised, nor do you have to learn Hebrew or complicated biblical commentaries in Aramaic. All that remained from the formalities of conversion to Judaism was the submersion in running water—baptism.

There was a problem, however. Paul spoke without authority. Strictly speaking he could not even be called an apostle or messenger—he had never seen Jesus alive. Perhaps he was a liar? What arrogance to knock over borders that had been erected by God Himself. Thus an intra-Jewish conflict erupted over Paul's missionizing. The stronger position was held by those followers of Jesus who insisted that pagan followers of the messiah become Jews first: this meant that the men had to be circumcised. Paul argued against this opinion like a rabbi who knew all the talmudic tricks. Was it not written in the Torah, "and Abraham believed the Lord, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness"? And had Abraham been circumcised at the time? Voilà! One did not have to convert to Judaism to be counted among God's chosen: faith in Jesus was enough.

It may seem that debates like these were theological hair-splitting. But they concerned very practical questions. Could Jewish and pagan followers of Jesus share a table and dip their bread into the same bowl, or did they have to worry whether the contents of the bowl were kosher? Was a Greek allowed to marry a Jewish girl in the name of Christ, or did he first have to offer a sensitive part of his body to the knife of circumcision? Paul's mind on these issues was set. He adamantly opposed forcing heathens under the yoke of Jewish law. Yet it would be wrong to assume that Paul repudiated Mosaic law altogether. After all, it was the fixed mark from which he argued even when he spoke against it.

Perhaps Paul was best understood by his enemies. Thus the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote with lucid distaste: Christianity would not exist without Paul, i.e., without "the confusions and thunderstorms of such a head; hardly would we have heard of a small Jewish sect whose master died on the cross." Elsewhere Nietzsche says that the process of decay that had begun with the death of Jesus was concluded by Paul, who used "the cynical logic of a rabbi." Paul had contaminated antiquity with his "*chandala* hatred," the hatred of the eternal inferior, which in turn led to the "denaturalization of all natural values." This "genius of hatred," Paul, had infected all things healthy with his Jewish slave morality, his guilty Jewish conscience. Therefore the Jews are "the most fatal nation of world history; in effect they falsified the world to an extent that even the Christian can feel anti-Jewish without understanding himself as the last Jewish consequence."

Nietzsche is perfectly right. It is true: Paul (a.k.a. Saul) was the most competent member of the Jewish world conspiracy. The secret of his success was that he spoke a metaphorical language that was commonly understood in antiquity: Christ, he said, had given himself up for us "as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." This new interpretation of Jesus' defeat made it possible for Hebrew enlightenment to transcend the boundaries of its own culture. It became acceptable for pagans who were not Noahides. Soon stories about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were being told outside the synagogues as well. The monotheistic idea seized the masses and became a material force. And God saw that it was good.

But was it? On the surface perhaps: in that third of the world where the Hebrew Bible and its appendix, the New Testament, had been disseminated, the gods seemed defeated and forgotten. But not far down, pagan nostalgia remained alive and kicking, waiting patiently for its appointed hour. It dawned in 1918 when the sun set over the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy once and for all.

This empire had succeeded in uniting different peoples from Galicia to the Mediterranean under one law and one double crown. It was an empire founded on solid sloppiness, but the cement that glued its multinational bricks together was Catholicism. At the same time the Star of David held a prominent place in its heraldry and the Jews were considered its most loyal citizens. Hence the nationalists in Budapest, Prague, and Vienna distinguished themselves by rabid anti-Semitism. The adherents of "pan-Germanism" fumed against the "Jewish emperors" who ruled Austria-Hungary and against the Roman Church that in their view deprived the

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nations of their true substance.

Shortly before the turn of the century the Viennese politician Georg von Schönerer founded a movement that was known by its slogan "Away-from-Rome." It quickly became popular among German Austrians; many Catholics with anti-Hapsburg feelings converted to Protestantism. Simultaneously a secret new faith spread across Europe: theosophy, as it was called by its prophet-priestess Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Theosophy was an occult cocktail made of Gnostic, Egyptian, and Hinduistic ingredients and topped off by a good shot of the Aryan myth. The followers of H. P. Blavatsky recognized each other by an ancient Eastern symbol of fertility—the swastika.

Thus a neo-pagan sect matured within the womb of the multiethnic Hapsburg empire. For on the eve of the First World War Schönerer's nationalistic faith and Madame Blavatsky's ideology mated. The offspring of this *liaison dangereuse* was baptized "Ariosophy," its spiritual fathers two fake aristocrats: Guido van List and Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels. Their apocalyptic vision promised a new era of German world domination under the leadership of wise pagan priests—an empire of light, inhabited by noblemen, which would be cleansed of all Judeo-Christian influence.

Let us jump backward in time to the nineteenth century. In 1834 Heinrich Heine's *The History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* was published in Paris. This marvelous book is a jewel of Saint-Simonian utopianism: crystal clear, polished with wit, and sparkling with genius. The poet seriously wanted to make the French believe that the Germans had for the moment confined their democratic revolution to the lofty sphere of philosophy but would make up for it thoroughly in the arena of politics.

At the end of this book Heinrich Heine shared the fate of the pagan prophet Balaam—only the other way round. In the Bible Balaam wants to curse but only blessings come over his lips: Heine, on the other hand, wanted to supply a heroic battle painting and sketched a nightmare instead. With gloomy lucidity he portrayed the future German revolutionary who would become terrible by "making contact with the primal forces of nature, by conjuring up the demonic powers of old Germanic pantheism so that a pugnacity awakes in him which we already find among the ancient Germans—a pugnacity which does not fight to destroy or to win but merely in order to fight."

Heine also remarked: "It is the greatest merit of Christianity that it has calmed this brutal Germanic pugnacity down somewhat. But it could not destroy it, and once the taming talisman—the cross—bursts asunder, the wildness of the ancient warriors of which the Norse poets have so much to say will shoot up again. This talisman is fragile, and the day will come when it will collapse miserably. Then the ancient stony gods will rise from the forgotten debris and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes, and finally Thor with his giant hammer will jump up and smash the Gothic cathedrals. At this sound the lions in the remotest deserts of Africa will knuckle under . . . and hide in their royal dens."

The accuracy of this prophecy is astonishing. Yes, the Gothic cathedrals lay in ruins when everything was over—just as the synagogues were rubble and ashes in 1938. And, yes, the lions fled to their dens as Rommel's tank army droned by on its way to the British Palestine, where the Jews in the kibbutzim stopped making children. In the middle of civilized Christian Europe, however, the cult of Wotan and Ishtar rose again. Furnaces for Moloch were being erected. Heavenly signs were being watched and interpreted accordingly. Albert Speer recalled a Nazi rally on the eve of World War II: "For an hour the legendary Untersberg which lay vis-á-vis was flooded by a very strong polar light. . . . The end of the Gotterdämmerung could not have been staged more effectively. The faces and hands of each of us were colored red. Suddenly Hitler turned to one of his military aides: 'This looks like a lot of blood. This time we will have to resort to violence.'"

The German messiah left no doubts concerning his agenda, as reported by Hermann Rauschning: "We are fighting the perversion of our healthiest instincts. . . . That devilish: Thou shalt! Thou shalt! And that stupid: Thou shalt not. . . . We commence hostilities against the so-called Ten Commandments; the tablets from Sinai are no longer in force. Conscience, like circumcision, is a mutilation of man."

It is no coincidence that in the beginning Great Britain was the only military obstacle in Nazi Germany's path. Winston Churchill, a regular contributor to the *Jewish Chronicle* who endorsed the Zionist enterprise in Palestine, referred to the example of the valiant Maccabees who rebelled against the Greek occupiers of ancient Israel: "Arm yourselves, and be courageous men, and be prepared to fight: for it is better to die in battle than to see the sacrilege which is being done unto our people and to our altars." Yet it would have been so tempting to enter into a treacherous peace with the Germans in 1940. France had just gone to the wall; in Dunkirk the British troops had suffered a severe defeat; the Soviet Union was still allied with the Nazi empire for all eternity; the Middle East was in uproar as the Arabs sided with the Axis; the United States was still far away. Britain stood desperately alone. Her Prime Minister, however, decided in the spirit of the Mac-

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cabees that the aim of this war was the unconditional surrender of Hitler's Germany.

Has Nazism survived its military defeat? Put in less poetic terms, does Hitlerism still exist as an ideology after it has lost its power?

The first thing that comes to mind here are the neo-Fascist parties in Europe. And it certainly would be foolish to belittle the threat they pose. However, political parties have the advantage of being visible. Much more dangerous are those Nazi ideas that blossom secretly, whether in feminist temples, the gardens of New Age, the greenhouses of ideological vegetarianism, or the discreet cult that animal protectionists have erected around our four-legged friends.

No, Nazism has not been victorious. But it has survived—incognito, as it were—under the guise of nonpolitical movements. It has become soft and tame and looks at the world with innocent blue eyes. Hardly ever does it take the floor under its real name and bare its fangs. Yet an anti-Semitic pamphlet that quoted the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and praised Hitler's occult powers sold like hotcakes in the New Age bookshops of Germany.

Ever since the Communist paradise on earth went to hell, nationalist pantheism has been spreading eastward. The statues of Lenin are finally lying on the rubbish heap of history, but new idols have already taken their places. The shallow journalistic phrase "Kremlin astrologers" suddenly is a metaphor no longer—Rasputin has thousands of great-grandchildren today. Everywhere in the former Soviet empire one finds an abundance of shamans with magic pendulums, soothsayers who talk to the dead, witches who tell fortunes.

At the threshold of the twenty-first century the gods are coming back. They climb out of flying saucers. They send telepathic news from other dimensions. As signs of the zodiac they determine the karma of the mortals. As mighty animal spirits they enter their followers and change them into superhuman beings. For their sake hordes of postmodern priestesses go on pilgrimages to the temples of Mexico and to places of worship in Crete; for their sake clever businessmen organize journeys of self-experience to the pyramids of Egypt and to Stonehenge. And the goddess of nature is the greatest of all deities. To honor her we enact complicated rituals of garbage separation, forge statistics about the world climate, ostracize environmental sinners, and pay indulgence to Greenpeace.

The green-catastrophic-New Age kind of gods have evidence and all likelihood on their side. One does not need occult capabilities to predict that their power will increase. Today the secret, or not-so-secret, religion of a majority of continental Europeans is vaguely neo-pagan: it consists equally of gnostic, pantheistic, and deistic elements. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (and of St. Paul) looks relatively poor in comparison. Even His own lobby leaves him in the lurch. Long ago a faith developed within European churches that has hardly anything in common with traditional Christianity.

Complicated topics such as sin, penance, and forgiveness are not often mentioned in Christian houses of worship nowadays. Instead Protestant ministers open themselves to astrological influences, light fumigating sticks, invite Hindu preachers, meditate, and learn from the various psychological cults. In the Book of Maccabees it is written: "At the time there were bad people in Israel who persuaded the people by saying, 'Let us make a covenant with the nations around, for we have experienced much suffering since we separated ourselves from the heathens.'" What the Jews went through long ago, it seems, is now happening to the Christians.

Will the Christian religion thus drown in the swamp of neo-paganism without making any major bubbles? Maybe. But then perhaps not. For here is something the Christians could learn from the Jews: there has always been a remnant that defended the law of Israel against the scorn and hatred of the world. This remnant is inconspicuous but not unimportant. The insignificance of its number corresponds precisely to the weakness of that distant, flickering light with which, on God's command, the first day of creation began. FT

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Human Dignity, Human Rights

Michael Novak

Fifty years ago, a tangle of intellectual and diplomatic puzzles blocked the world from agreeing on a universal code of human rights. In the years 1945-1948 the world was emerging only slowly from the devastation of the war that had burned through Asia and Europe. The largest nation of all, China, was in the midst of a bitter civil war, and Communists both there and in the Soviet Union harbored worldwide ambitions. Although consciences on all sides had been shocked by the bloodshed, the newly discovered death camps, and the tens of millions of displaced persons and refugees, no one way of thinking about moral issues commanded consensus. People seemed more divided about right and wrong after the war than they had seemed before it. How, then, could they come to agreement on a short list of the rights of all men? That was the first puzzle. It might be called the conundrum of pluralism.

The second conundrum had a different origin. One side in the great war claimed to be defending the individual, whereas two of the other great protagonists—the defeated National Socialists and the triumphant International Socialists (or Communists)—marched under the banner of community, the collective, and especially the state. These two visions of the future were antagonistic—or so it seemed. How could the opposing sides possibly agree about common principles, when the principles dearest to each were to the other anathema? Still, some thought, there must be some way to protect the rights of individual persons while recognizing at the same time the many communities in which all persons are concretely embodied. This might be called the conundrum of the individual or the state.

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The drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) did manage to cut both these Gordian knots. While protecting the ability of diverse consciences to disagree radically about the premises and principles of ethical theory, they found a way to emphasize a number of basic findings of practical reason, to which a sufficient majority of peoples around the world had been driven, whether by the terrors of the first half of the twentieth century or the wisdom of the previous three millennia. Many had been led, under the pressure of extreme suffering, down a sort of *via negativa.* Having seen the awful consequences of a world without universal standards, they were now ready to agree about certain practices that must not be done, not ever again. Where agreement about the whys and wherefores was still not possible, agreement about a few practical "don'ts" was almost universally sustained. Some of these standards might be stated as goals to be striven for in societies not yet fully developed, and thus be worded in positive terms. But virtually every one of the thirty principles of the final draft rested on bitter memories of recent abuses.

Similarly, East and West were not at all in agreement about the individual and the state. Nonetheless, there are some down-to-earth social institutions, such as the family, in which all humans function. Could not a way be found to bridge the gap between the Anglo-American zeal for the term *individual* and the Soviet insistence on the *state*? And between the Western predilection for *liberty* and the Asian (especially Chinese) emphasis on *duty*?

Once it was decided that the Universal Declaration could not possibly formulate a common theory about human nature and destiny, nor a common creed, but only declare, instead, a limited but quite clear practical code, the two recently fashioned keys suggested above began to turn in the locks.

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One key was to notice the sharp difference between the universality reached through the workings of *practical* reason and the universality possible through the work of the *theoretical* reason. The second key was to notice that the term *person* has connotations lacking in the term *individual*, and that such terms as *social* and *community* attach to many other referents besides *state*.

The next task was to find a "symphonic theme" that would make each measure of the Declaration more powerful and more meaningful by belonging to a whole, of which each was a partial but essential element. The actual drafters of the Declaration preferred to speak of finding an "architecture," a metaphor easier to visualize: its preamble as portico, its four "pillars" or axial principles, its four "rooms." But I believe the metaphor taken from music better expresses the way in which each principle of the code is intended to express harmonies, echoes, and motifs amplified by later principles. The force of the whole adds considerable meaning to each part.

The final task was to formulate each proposition of this code in a form most likely both to attract universal consent and to hold up under the pressure of events. Its drafters did not want the Universal Declaration to be discredited by subsequent events; on the contrary, they wanted its value to be enhanced by at least a modicum of prescience. Practicality in both senses was the key.

Even though the Declaration might come to be phrased positively, in terms of "rights" rather than in terms of "don'ts," one could think of these rights as reverse descriptions of practical actions that ought not to be taken. Concrete prescriptions have a more practical ring than theoretical affirmations. Besides, they are far more readily agreed to (and more difficult to oppose). This focus on practicality commended itself to diplomats, political leaders, and the public itself, and it was greatly strengthened by recent horrific memories and still-abiding fears.

Let us look more closely at the solutions to these philosophical logjams at the United Nations. In those years, there were not quite sixty countries in the United Nations, compared to today's 185. They still had radically opposed moral visions, though, and these quickly became apparent to the committee in charge of drafting the charter of UNESCO. On this commission the philosopher Jacques Maritain did especially useful work on the particular problem of pluralism. That work was in turn appropriated by those working on the Universal Declaration.

Like others, Maritain recognized quickly that agreement on common principles—a common philosophy of human nature and destiny—was out of the question. Among representatives of different faiths, worldviews, philosophies, and ideologies, there was no one theory that all of them shared. On the other hand, Maritain knew from his long studies of St. Thomas Aquinas, who had written at a time when various European cultures were meeting more mature and vital Muslim and Jewish cultures, that practice and theory are activities of two different habits of mind, and operate under different laws and constraints. This point requires a brief excursus.

Sometimes, people do quite well in practice what they cannot explain in theory, even as people who are excellent in theory often fail in practice. Theory is curiously impersonal; anyone, from any point of view, should be able to examine a theory, and to falsify or verify it in an objective way. But practice is incurably personal; the batting grip that works for one baseball player does not work for another. In practice, coaches, not theoreticians, are the most help. (Theory may be useful to coaches, but it is not enough.) Moreover, three or four persons can engage in the same practice although each has a different reason for doing so, and a different theory underlying his practice. This observation provided the clue Maritain was looking for:

> How is an agreement conceivable among men assembled for the purpose of jointly accomplishing a task dealing with the future of the mind, who come from the four corners of the earth and who belong not only to different cultures and civilizations, but to different spiritual families and antagonistic schools of thought? Since the aim of UNESCO is a practical aim, agreement among its members can be spontaneously achieved, not on common speculative notions, but on common practical notions, not on the affirmation of the same conception of the world, man, and knowledge, but on the affirmation of the same set of convictions concerning action. This is doubtless very little, it is the last refuge of intellectual agreement among men. It is, however, enough to undertake a great work; and it would mean a great deal to become aware of this body of common practical convictions.

Maritain restated the question before the committee. Instead of, How can such disparate intellectual positions be reconciled?, he asked, How much agreement can we reach regarding practices even while remaining incurably divided regarding the underlying theory for such practices? Maritain then raised two further questions that suggested an answer: Are there not some things so terrible in prac-

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tice that no one will publicly approve of them? Are there not some things so good in practice that no one will want to seem opposed to them? Since the answer to both questions likely was "yes," the relatively simple yet overlooked distinction between agreement in theory and agreement in practice broke the logjam.

This distinction—taken over from the UNESCO experience by those working on the Universal Declaration—allows people to stand firm on all points of principle, avoiding the trap of moral indifferentism or relativism. A Muslim need not surrender one iota of Muslim faith, or a Christian of Christian faith. Nor need a Communist abandon Communist theory. Maritain's approach was to ask one question only: Do you agree that the support of *this practice* and the prohibition of *that other practice* is a worthy criterion for the world community? Do you agree to declare that your nation will live under this code of practices? In the event, the Soviet Union did not sign the Declaration, but neither did it veto the action of putting it forward.

There were obvious weaknesses in the Declaration. Like the U.S. Constitution, the UN Declaration cannot of itself prevent behavior radically at odds with its principles. On the other hand, after 1975, with the publication of an extension of the Declaration in the Helsinki Accords, the Universal Declaration proved of inestimable importance to human rights activists behind the Iron Curtain. Indeed, these "mere words" were credited with being one of the most useful of all tools in the final discrediting and dismantling of the Soviet Union. The failure of the USSR to live up to this simple and elementary code of practice played a decisive role in delegitimating the regime, even in the eyes of serious Communists, during the turbulent period 1989-91. It worked much as Maritain had hoped it would.

For Maritain, *whether* it would work was in a sense a testable hypothesis. Even people who deny the existence of the natural law cannot help exemplifying it, he knew, because they are human beings who use practical reason every time they act. Maritain had learned from Aquinas that "natural law" is only the name for the actual working principles of practical reason. (Natural law presents no concrete ordinances, but does make principled demands regarding methods of practical inquiry.)

Charles Malik, head of the Commission writing the Declaration of Human Rights, played a role similar to Maritain's on pluralism with regard to the concepts of person and society. The Soviet delegation was allergic to the Western use of the term *individual*, and the U.S. representative, Eleanor Roosevelt, was firm in insisting that the individual is prior to the *state*. Other delegations had difficulties with both those terms. It seemed for a time that the impasse between rival political philosophies could not be broken. However, from various quarters Malik had become familiar with interesting possibilities in the word *person*, employed as a substitute for *individual*. The Anglo-Americans could live with the substitution, and Malik was careful to point out to others all the social reverberations of the term. He made *person* a far more attractive term to those who feared the radical separatism and potential lawlessness suggested by *individual*.

A cat or a dog, even a tree, can be an individual, but only a human being (or God and the angels) can be a person. *Person* is far more specific to the human race; it is a far more humanistic term. What makes a person a person, rather more than merely an individual, is a spiritual capacity: the capacity to reflect and choose, to be imaginative and creative, to be an originating source of action. We have two cats at home, and they merely behave. They can do no other than follow their own instincts. Our children, by contrast, do not merely follow the law of their own natures; they improvise, they think of new and crazy things, they create new *personae* for themselves.

Moreover, persons are reared over long years in families, and it is in families that their identities, habits, and character are established. Families further participate in whole networks of kin, neighborhood, religious tradition, and other intermediate associations, natural and civil, and in and through those relations live out a thick social identity. In this sense, societies take shape long before states do. Persons are social beings before they are aware of having their own distinctive personalities. Persons come to fulfillment only in community, and communities have as their end and purpose the raising of persons worthy of their inherent dignity. Dignity inheres in them because they are destined to be free to reflect and to choose, and thus to be provident over the course of their own lives, responsible for their own actions. A person is capable of insight, love, and long-term commitment. Such creatures are deserving of respect from other rational creatures. Their inherent nature makes civilization possible, since civilization is constituted by conversation, the art of persuasion through reason, mutual respect. Civilized persons argue respectfully. Barbarians use clubs.

These characteristics of *person* give rise, in turn, to the four main principles whose force is felt in every one of the thirty principles of the Declaration: Every human being without exception is worthy of dignity, liberty, equality, and brotherhood. In other words, the very term *person* implies a vision of a universal

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society, which for reasons of practicality and local autonomy, and by the natural workings of culture and history, is organized through countless local *associations* of varying sizes and horizons. Among these latter, of course, are *states*—but not the most important and not the primary social forms. Even the Soviet Union found it difficult to object to this language entirely, although its representatives did in fact object. For the USSR presented itself to the world through four different social forms: It was (it said) a union, of republics, formed by soviets (local communities), in a socialist project—the USSR. Whatever its declared differences, even in the Soviet Union smaller layers of societies, in theory at least, formed the Communist state.

From the very first words of the Preamble, then, the Universal Declaration avoids the term *individual* and takes care to surround the term *person* with references to the expanding circles of communities and associations in which, in the real world, actual persons become aware of their own capacities, responsibilities, rights, and obligations; and in which they find information about their human possibilities and their rights, in addition to moral and institutional support in vindicating them. In the Declaration are articles about the person and courts, the person and the family, the person and intermediate institutions, the person and religious or cultural traditions, the person and ethnic groups, the person and the state, the person and the international order.

Very neatly, in other words, the Universal Declaration represented concerns expressed by Latin American delegates, Asians, Africans, Middle Easterners, and others, and avoided boxing itself into the rather more partisan language of *individual* and *state* that figure so largely in both Anglo-American and Marxist discourse.

Moreover, the Universal Declaration deftly avoided another East-West pitfall by the way in which it treated the economic and social "rights" that the Soviets were most eager to get into the document, to offset the individual rights that they saw as false consciousness. The drafting committee took care to include the economic and social rights (articles 23-27). But they also took care to point out in a kind of preamble to them (article 22), and in a highly discernible change of tone and of sense, that the term "rights" was now being used in the document in a different sense. In the earlier set of rights, the state does not really have to *do* anything, except follow the law and otherwise stay out of the way, avoiding abuses.

In the case of the social and economic rights, by contrast, the role of the state is vastly expanded, some might say to an almost infinite degree. These rights are not spoken of as *immunities* from oppression *by* the state but as *entitlements* to goods and benefits *from* the state. Further, these goods and benefits are stated in the vague language of moving targets, as in the locution (article 22) "in accordance with the organization and resources of each state." The assumption seems to be that these are not, precisely, *rights* (in the way the American Bill of Rights speaks of rights) but, rather, *goods*—or even *goals* to be striven toward.

It is only a fairly rich and developed state that can provide its people the high standard of living, securities, and benefits held out as goods ("rights" in this new sense) in articles 23-26. Most nations in history have failed that test.

A small band of intrepid thinkers and doers succeeded, fifty years ago, in doing what many thought impossible, formulating a document to which all nations on earth might repair, and a document that was as responsible as anything for the "Helsinki process," which many credit with undermining the legitimacy of Communist governments in Eastern Europe. For here were official documents, signed by their own government officials and proudly published (at first) in official Communist newspapers, that informed dissidents of rights they didn't know they had. Waving these newspaper clippings, they embarrassed their leaders and put them on the defensive.

The small band led by Charles Malik succeeded only through stubborn persistence and an infinite capacity for explanation and patient instruction, as well as brilliant tactical diplomacy in the arts of running meetings, conducting public arguments, and corralling crucial votes. The sheer human patience and generosity of spirit required to conduct this wearisome political work is awe-inspiring. (Having served as U.S. Ambassador to the Human Rights Commission twice, and once to the Bern round of the Helsinki Commission for a period of about eight weeks each, I can testify how supremely demanding such work can be.) Yet at the distance of fifty years, what is most impressive is the penetrating intelligence and rich practical wisdom of the architects of the Universal Declaration. Not least impressive was their discovery of the two hidden keys—the key to the problem of irreducible pluralism, and the key to the conundrum of the individual and the state—that unlocked age-old chains. FT

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Abraham Lincoln & the Last Best Hope

Jean Bethke Elshtain

The beginning of the ninth century of the millennium now almost past was promising enough. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 marked, at long last, the end of the Napoleonic wars and heralded a period of enduring peace—peace under the auspices of emperors and monarchs of dubious legitimacy and stability, to be sure, but peace nonetheless. The settlement was far from complete. The Balkans remained a tinderbox and, indeed, the entire Austro-Hungarian Empire seemed an improbable thing to hold together indefinitely, composed as it was of a tension-ridden mix of languages, peoples, religions, and ethnic allegiances. Yet the Hapsburg crown, although loosely fixed on typically ineffectual royal heads, appeared more or less secure. In Russia, the Romanov autocracy was holding its own, despite rumblings of discontent connected, not least of all, with the continuing system of serfdom. France was—after Revolution, Terror, and Napoleon—a volatile mix of the autocratic and republican, but posed no immediate threat to others. The German-speaking peoples were scattered among multiple principalities, and spilled over into Russia, Central Europe, and—a point of major contention for France—Alsace-Lorraine. Only England appeared to have put together a workable combination of monarchy and constitutionalism.

The calendar notwithstanding, the real nineteenth century began in 1815, and the story of that century has often been depicted as one of Europe's outward expansion through territorial grabs ranging from Africa and Southeast Asia to the Indian subcontinent. Another story is that of "people's nationalism" within Europe, which erupted in the "springtime of the peoples" in 1848. Patriots such as Giuseppe Mazzini in Italy erected people's republics all over Europe, most of which were soon crushed by the old order. These reversals left in their aftermath nationalist frustrations that exploded sporadically—and most fatefully with the assassin's bullets that struck down Archduke Francis Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, precipitating the end of the century that began in 1815, and with it the end of the promise that was Europe.

But of course there was another nineteenth century, and there, too, promise and tragedy contended. A still young American republic strained outward in what seemed a limitless possibility of expansion driven by almost every human passion imaginable—ambition, greed, patriotism, desperation, curiosity, and a simple desire to better one's lot. Whatever the western pioneers were looking for, they usually found hard work and, for those with a little luck and the toughness to stick with it, a modest reward. It was a hard-scrabble frontier existence into which, on February 12, 1809, was born the figure who is at the center of the ninth reflection in this millennium series. So very much has been written about him, and I'm not sure that I, or anyone else for that matter, can say much that is new. But one need never apologize for thinking again about Abraham Lincoln.

Thomas Lincoln had managed to scrape together enough money to buy a small tract in Kentucky, and, as his son would later write, they moved when he was still a little boy to a larger tract "in the valley of Knob Creek, surrounded by high hills and deep gorges." It was rocky, unfruitful soil where the furious washing of a "big rain in the hills" would sweep new planting

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"clear off the field." The American frontier was called a new world, but it was a peasant subsistence very much like what had been known for centuries in the old. It seems that the mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, was able to read but could not write. Life was nonstop work from dawn to dusk, and "book learning" was held in slight regard.

Separating as best we can fact from legend, we know that the Lincolns set out for Indiana in 1816, crossing the Ohio River in search of better land titles and—at least according to recent biographer David Herbert Donald—in order to get away from slavery. Thomas Lincoln, who favored the Separate Baptist Church, apparently opposed slavery on both religious and economic grounds. Slave labor, he believed, was unfair competition to "free labor," and that argument was carried forward by Abraham, who was a free labor advocate throughout his years as a Whig and, later, as a Republican. From his mother's early death, it is said, began the spells of melancholia that would never leave him. In 1817 she succumbed to what was called "milk sickness," and a year later was succeeded by a stepmother, Sarah, who trailed in her wake three children and elegant domestic furnishings, such as were previously unknown to the Lincoln household. Sarah's liveliness did not end young Abraham's descents into melancholy, but we are told that the ungainly youth became sprightlier. Although Sarah was illiterate, Lincoln was now introduced to schooling for the first time, which quickly sparked his famous passion for book learning.

Lincoln's education, which may strike us as haphazard, was largely a matter of being drilled in the basics of grammar, spelling, composition, and ciphering, as it was called. Donald notes that Lincoln's contemporaries "attributed prodigies of reading to him, but books were scarce on the frontier and he had to read carefully rather than extensively. He memorized a great deal of what he read." Today, of course, memorization is routinely dismissed as "rote learning," and priority is given to "self-expression" in the service of "authenticity" and other presumed goods. Reflecting on the experience of Lincoln (and innumerable others subjected to "rote learning") may lead one to suspect that there is much to be said for having one's mind formed by the best that others have thought and said before giving it unbridled expression. All those hours spent reading by dim firelight the same book over and over (the way little children still like to be read to) were to contribute to Lincoln's being the foremost master of prose among our Presidents. Indeed, he has few peers in our entire history.

For young Lincoln, as for so many others of the time, an inescapable book was John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, first published in 1678. It is difficult for us today to appreciate the pervasive power and influence of Bunyan's tale, told "in the similitude of a Dream." In that sustained religious allegory of moral heroism and imagery both vivid and frightening, the reader lives through Christian's travails and all-too-human backsliding, until finally tasting his victory as one's own. Bunyan's biting commentary on human folly, joined to an inspiring account of human possibility, must have played an important part in shaping Lincoln's complexity of mind through a life of action and of reflection, often mordant reflection, on that action.

With the teenage years, Lincoln set out to escape the hard life he had known and became something of a drifter—trying on, as it were, different tasks, vocations, and identities. Settling in New Salem, Illinois, he took up the practice of law and began "politicking." The Lincoln legend has this "fresh breeze from off the prairie" (as Jane Addams called him) going from splitting rails to the White House, but neglects the many years in between when he was refining his craft as a speaker, writer, and politician. Despite distractions, setbacks, and uncertainties, his course was steadily upward: the move to Springfield, marriage with Mary Todd, election to the state legislature. As a politician he was mainly preoccupied with routine questions of domestic improvements, currency, and contract law. He was, in short, the familiar Whig politician, although a Whig with a growing reputation for straightforwardness, rough-hewn honesty, mental agility (with a streak of ironic humor), and a capacity for getting things done.

On the great question, Lincoln had never been pro-slavery, but his early pronouncements addressed it almost entirely in terms of free labor. Importing slaves into the new territories, he contended, would create unfair competition for nonslave labor. Under the force of circumstances and his own reflection, however, his public statements slowly began to change. The great question heated up with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which opened the western territories to slavery. The question was being recast in terms of a constitutional and moral crisis, with Northern calls for emancipation becoming ever more adamant. In response, Lincoln delivered a speech in Peoria, Illinois, on October 16, 1854 that may fairly be said to have put him on the course to his place in history.

He acknowledged the extraordinary difficulties in extirpating an established social institution, even when that institution is as pernicious as slavery. He

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allowed that his Southern contemporaries had not created the institution, and that "it is very difficult to get rid of it, in any satisfactory way." His own preference was to "free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia," but he knew the "sudden execution" of such a plan to be "impossible." Even if it were possible to send all the slaves there, most of them would likely perish without a means of support. Also unacceptable, he said, is the alternative of freeing the slaves and then keeping them here as "underlings." Because of a "universal feeling, whether well- or ill-founded" (a feeling that Lincoln confessed he shared), the option of making freed slaves "politically and socially our equals" was also excluded. His position was that slaves did have constitutional rights that must be respected, "not grudgingly, but fully and fairly." This left him with the proposal that the best to be done at present was to prevent the extension of slavery and to look forward to the possibility of "gradual emancipation." Even in the Peoria speech that gained him national attention, however, he left no doubt that his opposition to Kansas-Nebraska was based on the conviction that the "new free states are places for poor people to go to and better their condition." He frankly admitted that his chief concern was the welfare of poor whites.

Readers today may think the speech tepid, even repugnantly cautious. This is no clarion call for abolition. It is a thoughtful reflection on the relationship between moral duty and political possibility in the recognition that the two are not always nicely matched. Yet in the same speech he declared that there is no "moral right in the enslaving of one man by another." Slavery is a form of theft that violates the basic principle that none should live by the fruits of another's forced labor. In a manner both earthy and clear, Lincoln preached a "labor theory of value" not entirely unlike the theory advanced with such obtuse complexity by Karl Marx. He draws on a naturalistic morality, not entirely unlike natural law, rather than invoking doctrines of revealed religion. Slavery, he believed, is a consequence of our most base natural drives and is incompatible with a "love of justice" that is also natural. First principles are involved, and those principles can be known through reason. In 1858 he wrote a three sentence summary of his thought "On Slavery and Democracy": "As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a *master*. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

To the extent that it countenanced the institution of slavery, it would seem to follow, his country was not a democracy. Lincoln did not reach that conclusion lightly, such was his piety toward the American Founders. But he came to the view that their preeminent task had been to forge the federal union. They had no choice but to leave the slavery question to a future generation—to his generation. In this way of thinking, the Framers had not resolved but had only postponed the question of slavery, and Lincoln's sense that the time had come to move, however cautiously, toward a resolution had about it a force of obligation that he did not hesitate to call sacred.

In his 1858 debates with Stephen Douglas, the argument is extended: Slavery is not only wrong, it also "threatens the Union." While Lincoln continued to play to the race fears that were part of the free labor platform, he was also clear on what should have to give when popular sovereignty clashes with moral right. His devotion to democracy did not include the idolatrous doctrine that the voice of the people is the voice of God. What is true for the voice of the people applied also to the voice of courts. By ruling that slaves had no rights that white men were required to respect, the infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857, said Lincoln, was responsible for "blowing out the moral lights." The "real issue in this controversy," he contended against Douglas, is slavery and whether it should be treated as a "moral, social, and political wrong" or whether it should be made "perpetual and national."

While Lincoln lost the senatorial election of 1858, his campaign laid the foundation for his nomination and election as President in 1860. It was now clear to him that his task was the "repurifying" of the republic, to cleanse it "in the spirit, if not the blood, of the Revolution." "Let us," he declared, "re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and with it, the practices and policy which harmonize with it." He had accused Douglas of distorting the views of the Founders; there is not, he insisted, a shred of evidence that "the Negro was not included in the Declaration of Independence." That being said, the new President was not at all clear about what was to be done—meaning what was to be done without spilling rivers of blood and abandoning the American experiment in self-government.

The debate over the Civil War and Lincoln's part in precipitating, pursuing, and concluding it will continue as long as the American republic. That conflict is our defining tragedy. Yet Lincoln's words and conduct as war leader and definer of the conflict runs against the usual definition of the American character. He never minimized the costs or exaggerated what the war would achieve; his language was at once prophetic and tragic. If the defining American myth is that of Progress, the belief that each new time will be an improvement over what went before, Lincoln did not subscribe to it. He resisted also the temptation to depict opponents as wholly evil while

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casting oneself and one's allies as the "children of light." Much of American politics has been in the mode of moral crusade. Earlier in this century we fought a war to end all wars and make the world safe for democracy. The prohibition of liquor promised a nation restored to righteousness. Women's suffrage was not a matter of simple justice but what Elizabeth Cady Stanton called a "new evangel of womanhood." Examples of the crusading credo in action can readily be multiplied.

In *the* great conflict of American history, Lincoln seems almost un-American in his refusal to embrace that credo. A terrible duty had to be done and a terrible price had to be paid, and, in doing that duty and paying that price, good and evil were to be found on both sides of the conflict. In his resistance to the pattern of American "triumphalism," it is not too much to say that Lincoln reflected an Augustinian perspective on the ambiguities of history. Politics is a severely limited instrument, and the task of bringing about a social order approximately more just is always an unfinished task. All this is evident, above all, in Lincoln's own words—words that American school children, at least outside the deep South, were once required to memorize. Lincoln's words bear the weight of his awareness that he was, in ways not of his own desire or design, authoring and thereby authorizing the future of a republic "purified" by the blood of both North and South. Purified of the great wrong of slavery but not yet, perhaps not ever, pure.

The sense of dedication to an unfinished task comes through most powerfully in the Gettysburg Address. As all know, the featured speaker of the day was Edward Everett, the most famous orator of the time, a spellbinder who took two hours to say the many things appropriate to say upon the dedication of a military cemetery. Not until many years later did the public pay much attention to the few words of the President that followed. "Four score and seven years ago," and then it was "shall not perish from the earth," and the President had sat down before many in the crowd realized he was speaking. Those few words, barely mentioned at the time in the inside pages of the newspapers, have likely occasioned more reflection than any other text among people who would understand the genius of the American experiment. He spoke of consecration and hallowing, of a new birth of freedom and of a nation under God, but all without explicit reference to Divine agency or scriptural text. There is no doubt about the piety, but it is not piety on parade.

Setting aside the much discussed question of Lincoln's religion, there can be no doubt about his deep immersion in the cadences and parables of the Bible. His impatience with those who presumed to know the purposes of God has frequently been remarked. The proper human stance before the ways of the Lord, he believed, is that of deep humility. Thus he writes to Albert G. Hodges on April 4, 1864, a year before his own death, "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me." American political historian John Diggins says that Lincoln helped heal the "Machiavellian wound" that resulted from the separation of politics and morality. Lincoln, he believes, renewed the theory of statecraft by insisting that "ultimate moral questions did not admit of relativistic interpretations," while knowing at the same time that the attempt to right moral wrongs may have tragic consequences and almost certainly will not achieve unqualified success.

But again, our best course is to attend to the words of Lincoln. Recall the Second Inaugural Address of March 4, 1865, little more than a month before his death. There are two paragraphs on the war and the imperative to save the Union, moving directly in the next paragraph, the heart of the speech, to slavery. One side, he observes, wanted to strengthen and perpetuate the institution, the other to restrict its enlargement. (And, although he does not say so, many on the Northern side were determined to abolish it.) In any event, nobody expected a war of such magnitude and duration. Each hoped for an "easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding." Then come the extraordinary words that better educated Americans know almost by heart:

> Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!" If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?

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The form changes now to that of supplication:

> Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled up by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Of course, Southerners would for generations deride these words as an indulgence in unctious self-righteousness, and it is obvious that Lincoln was not "above" the conflict he is discussing. The description of the conflict is not, as it is said today, nonpartisan. His duty, reluctantly accepted, had been to be a partisan and a leader of partisans, but the import of the address is that now that time is past. More remarkable in the words of a victorious party is the refusal to recruit God as a partisan. The war and its outcome do not vindicate a grand narrative of historical inevitability but bring all parties under Divine judgment. We are united as a bleeding and wounded people, and it is on the basis of that experience, not on victory parades and rallies, that a nation is to be renewed. With Augustine, Lincoln recognized the lust to dominate that is so inextricably entangled with yearnings for peace and justice. No one walks away even from a justifiable war morally unscathed.

Lincoln offers words that are, at the same time, benediction, his own epitaph, and a continuing inspiration to a more worthy politics.

> With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

The reference to other nations is by no means incidental to Lincoln's understanding of what was at stake in America's conflict. In history's ongoing struggle between despotism and self-government, he was prepared to believe that America was earth's "last best hope"—not as the world's economic colossus or imperial hegemon but as an exemplar of what politics, with all its limitations, can accomplish.

A poem to which Lincoln often returned was "Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?" written by one William Knox. Forget that it is not great poetry, indeed that it descends to doggerel. It says something important about the man who thought it wise.

> *Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?*
> *Like a swift fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,*
> *A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,*
> *Man passeth from life to his rest in the grave. . . .*
>
> *The hand of the king that the sceptre hath borne;*
> *The brow of the priest that the mitre hath worn;*
> *The eye of the sage and the heart of the brave,*
> *Are hidden and lost in the depth of the grave. . . .*
>
> *The saint who enjoyed the communion of heaven,*
> *The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven,*
> *The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,*
> *Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust. . . .*
>
> *'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,*
> *From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,*
> *From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud—*
> *Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?*

Perhaps it is too obvious to observe that, in an era of sound bites, poll-driven politicians, plausible deniability, single-interest PACs, and media spinmeisters, Lincoln seems to exist in a different moral and political universe. And it is both true and a very good thing that other Presidents did not have such momentous events by which they were controlled and made candidates for comparable greatness. That being said, however, Lincoln is by no means irrelevant. He was in most respects a politician like other politicians. He knew all about interests and power, was a master of clever ripostes, well-placed barbs, and the tricks of outwitting opponents. In short, he played the game and played it very well.

The difference is that he never forgot that politics is one way in which very imperfect human beings can enact projects based on moral reasoning; that politics is a theater of both comedy and tragedy, relentless in the teaching of humility. It is cause for both amazement and gratitude that, in a century when the promise of Europe migrated to a New World which, or so we are told, offers the prospect of the nearest thing there has ever been to a universal history of freedom and justice, Abraham Lincoln was President of these United States of America. More than a hundred years later, there is no point in hoping for another Abraham Lincoln. But one may hope that we have not entirely forgotten the possibilities of political and moral leadership that he exemplified. FT

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Books In Review

Witness to the Witness

Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II. By George Weigel. *HarperCollins/Cliff Books. 992 pp. $36.*

Reviewed by **Avery Dulles**

The life of John Paul II invites superlatives, and George Weigel is not unwilling to employ them. This Pope, he asserts, is "the most compelling public figure in the world, the man with arguably the most coherent and comprehensive vision of the human possibility in the world ahead." "He is arguably the most well-informed man in the world." "No human being in the history of the world had ever spoken to so many people, in so many different contexts." Weigel might perhaps have added that no one has been the subject of so many biographies, and such long ones, published in his own lifetime. Beginning with George H. Williams' *The Mind of John Paul II* (415 pp., 1981), we have seen a stream of serious biographies, each longer than its predecessors: *Pope John Paul II: The Biography* by Tad Szulc (542 pp., 1995); *His Holiness*, by Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi (582 pp., 1996); *Man of the Century: The Life and Times of Pope John Paul II* by Jonathan Kwitny (754 pp., 1997). In subtitling his book *The Biography*, Weigel seems to be deliberately challenging the claim of Szulc.

If a choice had to be made among the biographies, Weigel would clearly win. His book is the longest (992 pages, including index). As the most recent, it is able to build on, and at some points correct, its predecessors.

Avery Dulles, S.J., *holds the Laurence J. McGinley Chair at Fordham University.*

Weigel has the further advantage of understanding and professing the Catholic faith, as a result of which he is able to give due attention to the theological, pastoral, and spiritual dimensions of Karol Wojtyla's career neglected by some of the other authors. The Pope, in fact, asked George Weigel to write this book, accorded him many interviews, and gave him access to confidential documents and personal conversations with trusted friends and advisers. While this biography is not "authorized" in the sense of having been reviewed and approved by the Pope, and while it is not uncritical, it is the kind of biography that will surely please John Paul II. Its publication in half a dozen languages is sure to be a major literary event.

Although the Pope is still very much alive, this biography was written none too soon. Posthumous biographies labor under the difficulty that the witnesses tend to be unavailable. Weigel, however, has been able to interview not only the Pope himself but also many living associates, including some of his boyhood friends such as Jerzy Kluger, who has played a singular role in improving Catholic-Jewish relations.

The early pages of the book take the reader back to a time when Catholics and Jews lived together amicably in southern Poland before the rise of anti-Semitism in the 1930s. The opening chapter vividly recreates the peaceful and pious Polish environment of the 1920s (Wojtyla was born in 1920), when young "Lolek" prayed with his father at the shrine of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska and when he took part in a student pilgrimage to the shrine of the Black Madonna at Czestochowa. These early experiences of traditional Polish Catholicism were decisive for the present Pope's dedication to prayer, his promotion of pilgrimages, and his tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

From these tranquil beginnings we pass on to the nearly unimaginable brutality of the Nazi persecution, directed against both Jews and Catholics in Poland. There should be no competition among the victims. The story of those terrible days makes it clear that, while Jews undoubtedly suffered the heaviest blows, both groups were targets of Hitler's venom, which was atheistic, antireligious, and racist at once. The Jagiellonian University, where Wojtyla was enrolled, was dispersed, and he himself was forced to labor for the occupation forces, first in a limestone quarry and then in a Solvay chemical plant. His faith and unremitting prayer enabled him to find God in the midst of great personal suffering. As a poet, dramatist, and actor, and then as an underground seminarian, Wojtyla exhibited the irrepressible creativity and courage that has marked his life as a whole. He saw the importance of maintaining Polish culture, which neither the Nazis nor, subsequently, the Marxists were successful in suppressing.

Almost immediately after his ordination to the priesthood in November 1946, Wojtyla was rushed to Rome. In some eighteen months of study under the Dominicans of the Angelicum he completed his doctoral studies. In the summer holiday of 1947 he gained useful contacts with the "worker priest" movement in France and with the Young Christian Workers in Belgium. In later essays Wojtyla reflected on the anomaly of the relapse of France into post-Christian paganism at the very moment when its intellectuals were bringing Catholic culture to remarkable heights. One lesson, he believed, was the necessity of maintaining a laity who would be alert to their responsibility to implement the gospel in its social dimensions.

Weigel's description of Wojtyla's life as a young priest in and about Krakow should be an inspiration to priests and laity alike. Wojtyla used his

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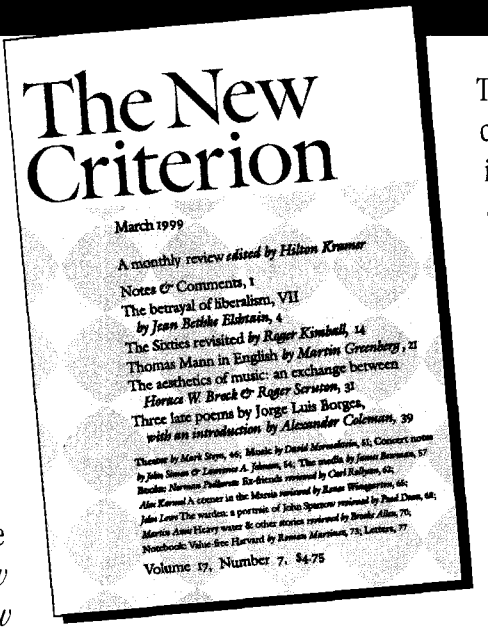
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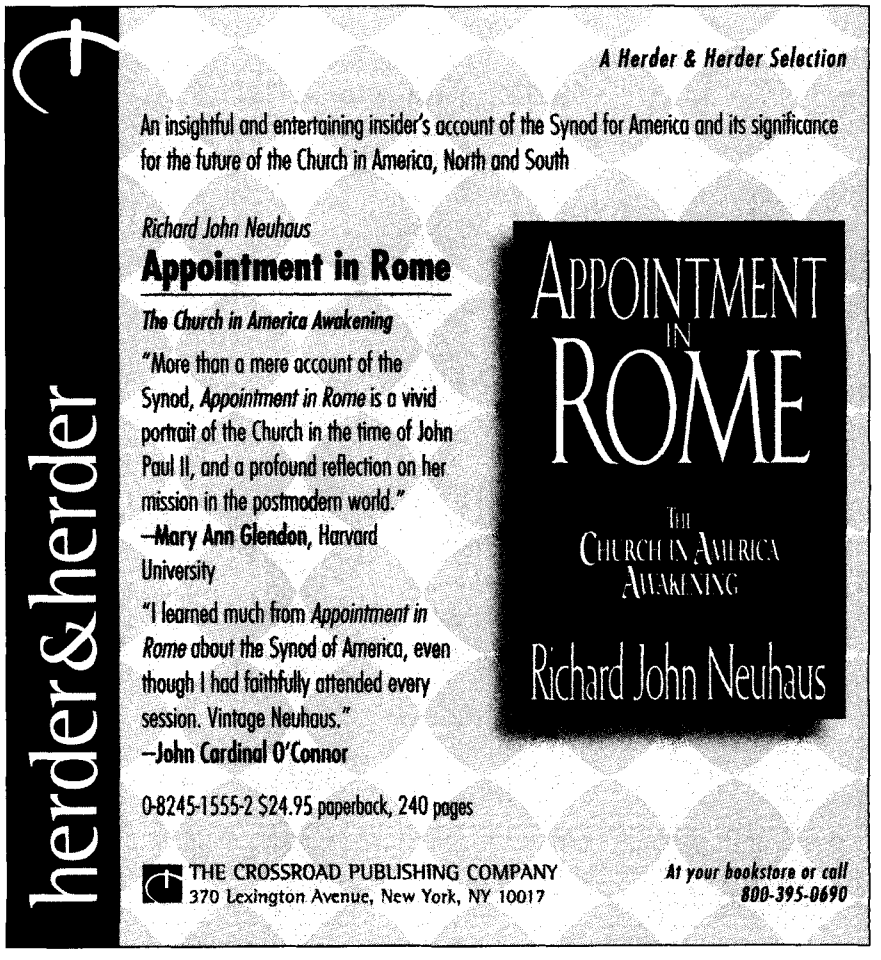
intellectual and charismatic gifts very effectively to form all sorts of parish groups for social, liturgical, and intellectual nourishment and apostolic activity. Marriage and baptism, administered at his hands, were not mere routine rituals but transforming events, leading to conduct in which the grace of the respective sacraments was lived out. By means of his outings with student groups and young adults, climbing mountains, skiing, and kayaking, Wojtyla set a novel pattern of nonclerical but authentically priestly ministry, in which spiritual conversation and worship were felicitously combined with relaxation and entertainment. While venturing far beyond the sanctuary, he never stepped out of his role as a priest.

When the young Wojtyla was assigned to further studies and professorial duties, he maintained many of his pastoral involvements. His dissertations in Rome on Saint John of the Cross and in Krakow on Max Scheler may not have forged new advances in intellectual history, but they admirably prepared their author for his eventual magisterial responsibilities, both academic and ecclesiastical. Throughout this period of study and pastoral activity he continued to produce volumes of poetry and plays—art forms that appealed to him as reaching the inner depths of the human condition. His book on *Love and Responsibility*, based on lecture courses of the late 1950s, was programmatic for his later writings on love, human rights, sexuality, and marriage. In his articles and lectures, Professor Wojtyla sketched out the theological anthropology that would appear in more systematic form in his postconciliar work, *The Acting Person*.

The young priest was on a kayaking trip with friends in the summer of 1958 when he received orders to return immediately and report to the primate, Cardinal Wyszynski, who gave him the news that he was being made a bishop—the youngest in Poland. Almost immediately after his consecration he became involved in the preparations for Vatican II. When the Ante-Preparatory Commission was established in June 1959, Wojtyla submitted a long memorandum, proposing that the Council should address the situation of the human person in the world of today.

The four years of Vatican II (1962-1965) were crucial for the formation of the young bishop. Weigel, like Rocco Buttiglione and other biographers, vividly portrays his energetic participation in the shaping of several Council documents, especially the *Declaration on Religious Freedom* and the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. It was at the Council that he formed a lifelong friendship with Henri de Lubac, who later recalled being impressed by all that Wojtyla had to say at meetings of the commission on the "Apostolate of the Laity." "The superiority of his mind and his great openness," said de Lubac, "were evident to all." He also won the admiration of Yves Congar, from whose unpublished diary for February 2, 1965, Weigel is able to quote: "Wojtyla made a remarkable impression. His personality dominates. Some kind of animation is present in this person, a magnetic power, prophetic strength, full of peace, and impossible to resist."

Karol Wojtyla's activities as archbishop of Krakow (1964-1978) are handled rather summarily in a fifty-page chapter. In view of the importance of these years, I wish that more could have been said about his interpretation of Vatican II and his implementation of its teachings in his archdiocese, especially through the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Archdiocesan Synod that met from 1972 to 1979. During this period the Cardinal Archbishop traveled to many parts of the world, including three visits to the United States (1969, 1973, and 1976). He was heavily engaged in the Synod of Bishops, serving on the Synod Council from 1971 through 1977. The Synod assemblies from 1967 to 1977 did much to set the direction of the Catholic Church at a time of flux and confusion. Cardinal Wojtyla, it appears, had significant input into the Synod teaching on the collegiality of the bishops (1969), the ministerial priesthood (1971), justice in the world (1971), evangelization (1974), and catechesis (1977). Weigel, by devoting less than two pages to the Synod of Bishops, leaves the reader hungry for further details on Cardinal Wojtyla's role in all these meetings and the interim meetings of the Synod Council.

In researching the conclave of October 1978 Weigel seems to have managed to breach the official secrecy, thanks to interviews with a number of cardinals who were present, especially Franz König of Vienna, who championed the election of Wojtyla. With that election, the biography picks up speed to reflect the whirlwind pace of the new Pope's activity and his involvement in events across the face of the globe. From this point on, the biography could almost pass muster as a review of recent world history, though it never loses its focus on the Pope himself.

IN THE TWENTY-YEAR span of John Paul II's pontificate from 1978 to 1998, Weigel finds much to celebrate. The new Pope's triumphal tour of Poland on his first visit in 1979 is the climax of the initial phase. Weigel holds that the Pope's two addresses to the United Nations General Assembly (1979 and 1995) were magisterial. Likewise, his brilliantly crafted speeches in Cuba in January 1998, without ever directly mentioning the regime,

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spoke powerfully to the Christian soul of the Cuban people, apparently leaving Fidel Castro embarrassed and tongue-tied. The succession of World Youth Days at Buenos Aires (1987), Santiago de Compostela (1989), Czestochowa (1991), Denver (1993), Manila (1995), and Paris (1997) show that the aging Pope, while diminishing in physical vigor, retains his charisma.

In his comments on the Pope's writings Weigel shows enthusiasm for most of the encyclicals—especially *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) on evangelization, *Centesimus Annus* (1991) on social reconstruction, *Veritatis Splendor* (1993) on the principles of moral theology, *Evangelium Vitae* (1995) on the sanctity of human life, *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) on ecumenism, and *Fides et Ratio* (1998) on the Christian renewal of philosophy. Most of these encyclicals, as Weigel reports, were well received. The controversy resulting from *Veritatis Splendor*, in his view, only proves the urgency of the Pope's teaching as a corrective of current errors. The encyclicals on God the Father (*Dives in Misericordia*, 1980) and on the Holy Spirit (*Dominum et Vivificantem*, 1986), Weigel believes, deserve more attention than they have received.

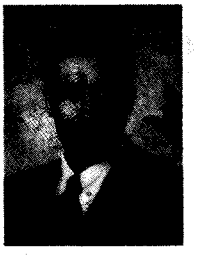
The general audience talks gathered under the title *The Theology of the Body* (1979-1984) are, in Weigel's estimation, the first compelling papal response to the sexual revolution. These lectures, which portray the expression of human love in marriage as an icon of the divine self-giving, represent in his view a signal advance in the theology of marriage, far surpassing earlier Catholic teaching. Paul VI's famous "birth control" encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, in Weigel's estimation, failed to adopt a rich personalist context and thereby left the Church open to the charges of legalism, biologism, and pastoral insensitivity. Weigel likewise extols the Pope's theology of woman, expressed in *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988) and his *Letter to Women* (1995), as setting the course for the Church's engagement with the women's movement in the coming century.

Weigel's appreciation of the Pope's writings is not, however, uncritical. While admitting that *Laborem Exercens* (1981) is the Pope's own preferred social encyclical, Weigel finds it "empirically questionable" on a number of counts. The second social encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1988), in Weigel's opinion, is marred by the influence of Catholic intellectuals and activists who believed in the "moral equivalence" of the first-world and second-world blocs. The apostolic letter on the ordination of women, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994), Weigel judges, was flawed by a "strategic error"—the decision to issue it as a confirmation of Paul VI's teaching on the subject rather than to develop the argument from the spousal nature of the Church. The letter might have shown more convincingly that the priest, sacramentally representing the Bridegroom, could not suitably be a woman.

For any lack of success in this pontificate Weigel tends to blame the Vatican staff for giving bad advice. At some points the curia comes in for much the same kind of drubbing that we have come to expect from authors belonging to the liberal reformist school. Weigel is in fact able to document a number of staff errors. The financial dealings of the "Vatican Bank" with the Banco Ambrosiano of Milan can hardly be charged to John Paul II himself. The mistakes of the Secretariat of State and the diplomatic corps, it seems, caused the angry reaction of the Russian government at the erection of three apostolic administrations in the former Soviet Union. An indiscretion by the Congregation for Oriental Churches, moreover, was responsible for the collapse of the negotiations for a meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch Aleksy that was to take place in Vienna in June 1997.

These isolated cases, however, should not be taken as typical. Excellent staff work facilitated many of the Pope's pastoral journeys and the negotiations leading to the recognition of Israel. Weigel is able to give

Defending the Christian worldview



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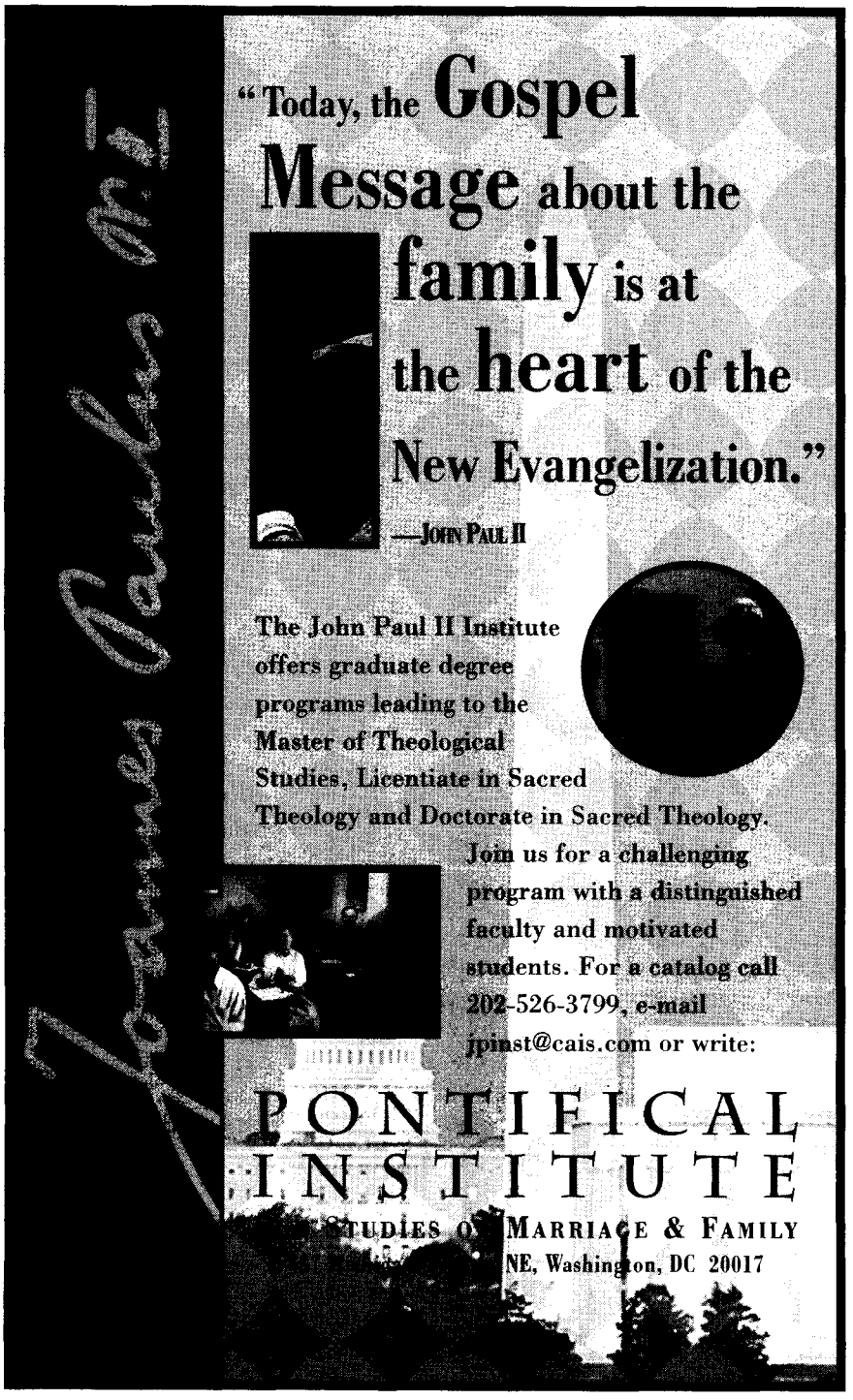
credit to Father David-Maria Jaeger, O.F.M., for helping to bring the negotiations between the Holy See and Israeli representatives to a successful conclusion. He praises Mary Ann Glendon for her work at the Beijing Conference on Women, and several collaborators from the curia and beyond for their contributions to *Veritatis Splendor.*

ON SOME ISSUES Weigel seems to disagree with the Pope himself. While celebrating the Pope's qualified endorsement of free-market capitalism in *Centesimus Annus,* he is evidently uneasy with the Pope's repeated critiques of economic liberalism. And on just war theory, Weigel continues to defend the position taken in his own book *Tranquillitas Ordinis* (1987) in favor of the possibility of waging just wars in our day. The Pope, he believes, has failed to clarify the moral criteria for the legitimate use of armed force in defense of basic human rights and for "humanitarian intervention" on behalf of innocent victims. "The Vatican's performance in the Gulf War crisis between August 1990 and March 1991," Weigel writes, "did not meet the high standards set in the previous twelve years of the pontificate."

American readers will be particularly interested by Weigel's handing of the Pope's relationship with President Reagan in backing the Solidarity movement, which toppled the Communist government of Poland. In this section of his book, Weigel rejects the various portraits of the "political Pope" found in other biographies. In particular, he refutes the claim of Bernstein and Politi that John Paul and Reagan entered into a conspiracy in which the Pope would have agreed to steps such as the placement of NATO intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe as the price for American support of the Solidarity movement. Weigel insists that the Pope's strategy was culture-driven and evangelical, not political.

The mutual respect between John Paul II and President Reagan does come through in Weigel's treatment. He takes satisfaction in quoting at some length from the Pope's "paean to 'ordered freedom'" at his meeting with President Reagan in Miami on September 10, 1987. Weigel also reports with regret on the Bush Administration's neglect of relations with the Holy See.

LENGTHY AS THIS work is, it had to come to an end. For practical purposes Weigel closes his story with the celebration of the twentieth anniversary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of Wojtyla's election as Pope, on October 16, 1998, although certain additions have been made after the book was set in proof to take care of key events of early 1999, such as the agreement of Lutherans and Catholics to sign their *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* on October 31, 1999. There will presumably be much more to the Wojtyla story as the jubilee year of 2000 unfolds. Perhaps someday, in a later edition, Weigel will be able to complete his account.

As it stands, this book is a major contribution, invaluable for putting John Paul II's achievements into proper perspective. Not content with vague generalities, Weigel spares no pains to furnish exact personal names, dates, places, and figures. His interest never seems to flag, whether he is writing about theological debates, political events, literature, or even medical data. He has been tireless in gathering information about the Philippines, Central America, Poland, France, Germany, and practically every corner of the globe. I noticed very few errors of fact, all of them trivial.

The career of John Paul II is complex enough to challenge the most venturesome of biographers. To survey it is to be drawn deep into the disciplines of literature, Polish history, Jewish-Christian relations, diplomacy, political theory, scholastic theology, phenomenology, physical science, and theology. Weigel, to his credit, dodges none of these topics. His refusal to be selective gives a somewhat choppy character to the narrative, but that is a price the reader should be willing to pay for the thoroughness of this biography. The subject itself requires many changes of scene.

John Paul II's theological vision gives an overarching unity to his thought and his program of action. Everything he says and does has some reference to his universalistic Christology. Jesus Christ, he maintains, is the paradigmatic human being and the indispensable channel of God's redemptive love for all men and women. For this reason the Pope, immediately after his election, could issue the stirring invitation: "Be not afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ. To his saving power open the boundaries of states, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization, and development."

One of Weigel's literary devices impresses me as ill-conceived. In many cases he begins his chapters with a vignette that anticipates what is to come later in the story, perhaps with a view to capturing the reader's interest. I found these departures from the chronological order unnecessary and confusing.

Another shortcoming, though it does not substantially detract from the merits of the book, is Weigel's failure to emphasize the continuities between John Paul II and his recent predecessors—continuities that the present Pope wished to emphasize by the very name he adopted at his election. Pius XII, whom Weigel portrays as a recluse dependent on a clerical bureaucracy, does not receive due credit for the inner renewal of the Church in his great encyclicals on the Mystical Body, biblical studies, and the liturgy, and for bringing the Catholic Church into relationship with the coming global order in his great Christmas radio broadcasts during World War II.

Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council consistently built on Pius XII's teaching regarding human rights. It is not enough to say, as Weigel does, that commitment to the defense of basic human rights "had been implicit" in John XXIII's 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris* and in the documents of Vatican II. Writing in 1979, David Hollenbach was able to call *Pacem in Terris* "the most powerful and thorough statement of the Roman Catholic understanding of human rights in modern times."

When speaking of the evangelical

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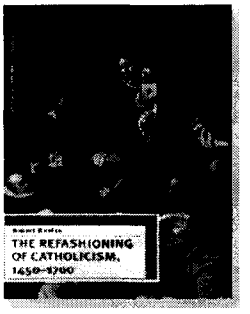

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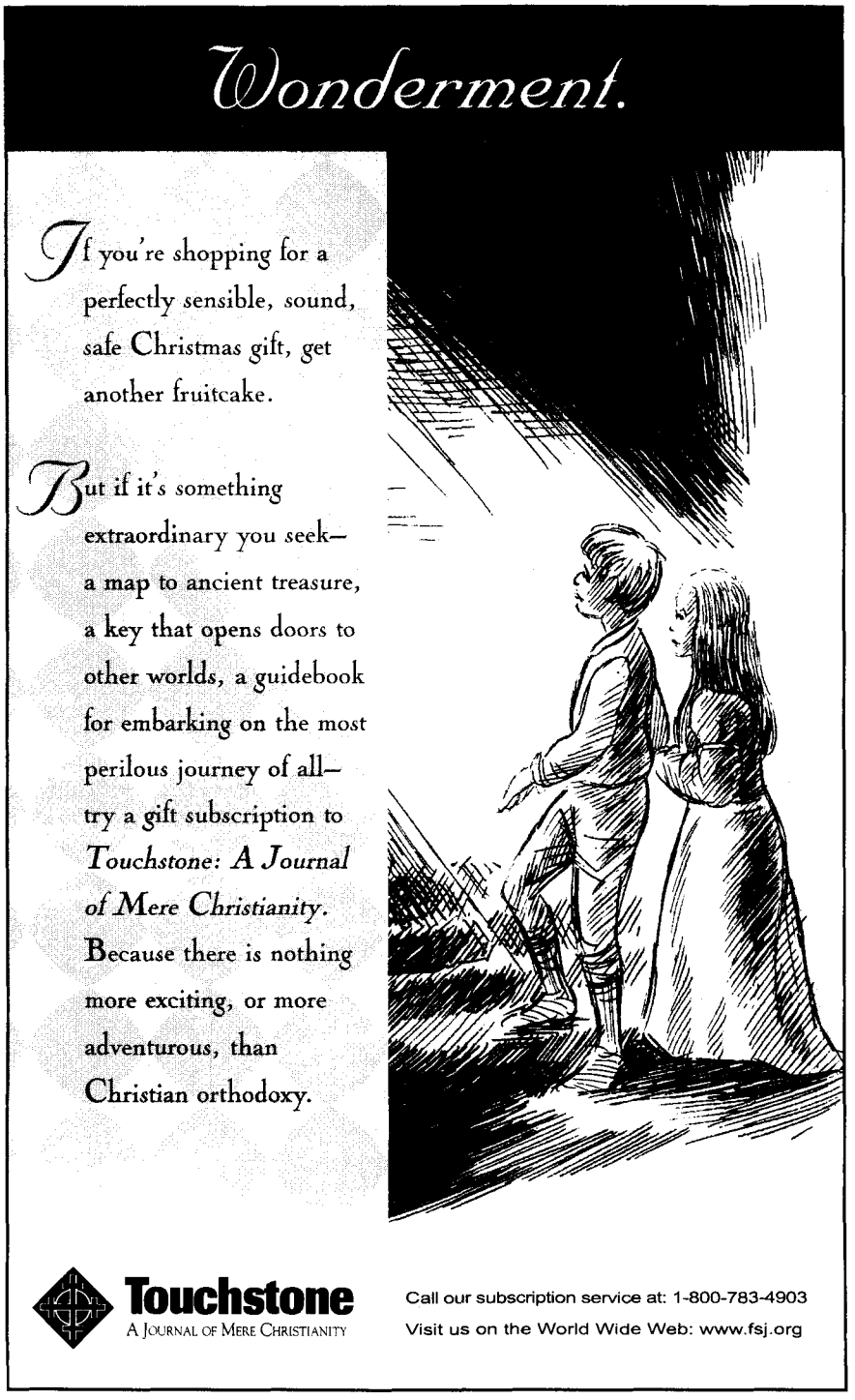
renewal of the papal office, Weigel treats it as an original accomplishment of John Paul II, without giving adequate recognition to Paul VI, who has been plausibly described as "the first modern Pope"—a claim that Weigel takes pains to refute. Many, even most, of the salient features of John Paul II's pontificate, as summarized in Weigel's final chapter, were anticipated by Paul VI. He was, like John Paul II, a Pope of dialogue, of religious freedom, and of ecumenism, especially in his cordial relations with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. He called attention to the priority of culture and gave a strongly evangelical and missionary stamp to his apostolate, carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. Paul VI's great apostolic exhortation on "Evangelization in the Modern World" contains all the essentials of John Paul II's program for the "new evangelization."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THESE GREAT POPES of the twentieth century cannot fairly be described as though they were imprisoned in the bureaucratic machinery of the Vatican. If they worked more closely than John Paul II does with their curia, history may judge them favorably for having done so. The intensely personal style of Wojtyla's papacy has been impressive, but it too has its limitations. Some Popes are outstanding for teamwork and administrative competence, whereas others, like John Paul II, follow their own inspiration. No one Pope can exhaust the potentialities of the office.

If Weigel lets himself be trapped by the journalistic stereotypes of earlier Popes, he successfully contests the standard journalistic portrayals of John Paul II. His book should explode, once and for all, the myth of Wojtyla as "an angry old man incapable of understanding the world he helped to create." He shows how the Pope's radical commitment to the gospel permits him to value the freedom of every person to follow the biddings of conscience. Forceful he sometimes is, but never impatient. Because he expects the following of Christ to be strewn with crosses, he retains his joy, his ready wit, and his impish sense of humor even in the midst of distressing situations. Fortified by a deep spirit of prayer, he seems to be utterly fearless in confronting danger and opposition. Because of his unshakable faith in Christ and his unfaltering trust in the Holy Spirit, John Paul II preeminently deserves the title, which Weigel adopts from the Pope's own self-

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description, "witness to hope." And George Weigel is, thus far, the principal witness to that witness. He has written a memorable biography of an extraordinary leader.

Between Liberalism and Orthodoxy

Beyond Reasonable Doubt. By Louis Jacobs. *Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. 267 pp. $39.50.*

***Reviewed by* Jon D. Levenson**

In 1957, Louis Jacobs, a British Orthodox rabbi in good standing, published a book entitled *We Have Reason to Believe*, in which he argued that religious Jews needed to revise their traditional theology in light of the more assured conclusions of historical criticism of the Bible, including the idea that the Torah is a composite work and not, as the premodern tradition had taught, entirely the work of Moses.

An immensely learned man, Rabbi Jacobs had been slated for the principalship of Jews' College, Britain's seminary for Modern Orthodox clergy. But the chief rabbi, alerted to the heterodoxy of the volume, refused to approve the appointment, and Jacobs resigned his faculty position, entering into a kind of communal no-man's-land of traditional observance and belief in God without the traditional doctrines held, often unthinkingly, by almost all Jews who practice as he does. *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* restates and defends anew the thesis of *We Have Reason to Believe* and tells the story of the controversy it provoked. It also provides a critical survey of the spectrum of contemporary options for committed Jews as well as a few sketchy, disconnected discussions of traditional theological notions from Jacobs' own position.

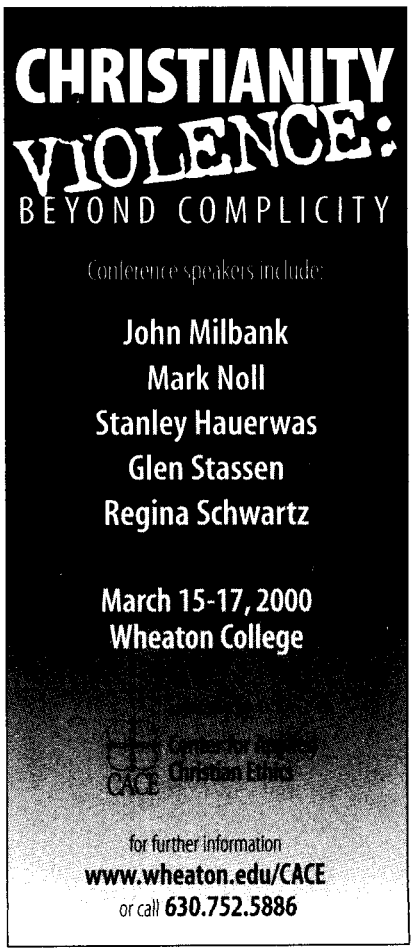
Jacobs calls that position "liberal supernaturalism"—"'supernaturalism' in that it affirms God as transcendent and 'personal,' wholly Other and yet in control of the universe He has created; 'liberal' in that it accepts the findings of modern scholarship, resulting in a non-fundamentalistic understanding of how ancient traditions, ideas, and practices were combined, over many centuries and through human trial and error, to form the Torah." Whereas forty years ago Jacobs labeled himself "Orthodox" (given his observance of halakhah, or traditional Jewish law), today "to avoid confusion," he describes his position "not as Orthodox but as Masorti," a Hebrew term meaning "traditional." As Jacobs points out, a notion of the Torah as composite and to a small degree post-Mosaic can be found, ironically, in a few premodern authorities revered by the same Orthodox Jews who revile his position.

Jacobs rejects not only the "fundamentalist supernaturalism" of his Orthodox opponents, but also the "liberal naturalism" that agrees with fundamentalism that "one who is prepared to accept the results of the historical-critical school and its implications cannot believe in a personal God" and must deny that there is a "divine element" in the Torah. As Jacobs, with characteristic elegance, puts it: "Liberalism redeems supernaturalism from primitiveness. Supernaturalism redeems liberalism from banality and crude historicism."

Given the centrality of halakhah in the Jewish tradition, the key question arises as to whether the liberal supernaturalist will observe the commandments, or rather ascribe them to the "human trial and error" that Jacobs holds to be essential to the formation of Torah. He insists, however, that his difference with fundamentalism is "not on whether the precepts are commanded by God . . . but on how the command was conveyed." Jacobs sees the commandments as made by "God-seekers who were followed by popular consensus, itself under the guidance of God." Relative to the Orthodox position, this magnifies the human role and replaces revelation with inspiration and providence.

Despite his strong and often compelling argument for his Masorti position, Jacobs concedes that "psychologically, it is undeniable that a clear recognition of the human development of Jewish practice and observance is bound to produce a somewhat weaker sense of allegiance to the minutiae of Jewish law." What is unclear is whether he regards this as an unfortunate and logically unnec-

Jon D. Levenson *is the Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies at Harvard Divinity School and author of* The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies *and* The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity.



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essary consequence of his theology, or as an intrinsic aspect of liberal supernaturalism. If the latter, then his position is farther from Orthodoxy than he may recognize, for it fails to support even a non-fundamentalist orthopraxy, thus breaking sharply with its premodern analogues.

That Jacobs' position is actually the less traditional one is suggested by his belief that "the non-fundamentalist is free to choose which sabbath and other observances awaken a response in him." Now we have not only a higher degree of human involvement in the making of historic Judaism, but also something very new in Jewish thought, the notion that halakhic norms are subordinate to individual experience and depend upon a subjective "response." If Jacobs is right that psychologically, liberal supernaturalism tends to produce a lessened degree of observance, it must be stressed that logically, nothing in the historical-critical study of the Bible and other authoritative Jewish books requires the individualism and the romantic subjectivism of Jacobs' theology. Honest historical scholarship does not "free" anybody "to choose" anything. It cannot even tell us which "popular consensus" is under "divine guidance" and which is not.

HAVING CUT THE ground out from under traditional concepts of halakhic obligation, Jacobs is at pains to offer the modern Jew a reason to choose the traditional observances after all. For example, in considering the Karaites, an anti-rabbinic sect, he tells us that "when all is said and done, history has decided, or, better, God has decided through history, that the Rabbanites have won out and that this, therefore, is the admittedly man-made Torah that God wishes us to keep if we wish to be faithful to Judaism as a religion."

The theory is that of the nineteenth-century Breslau school that lies behind Conservative/Masorti Judaism—"that origins and historical considerations are matters of scholarship, while religion has to do with what has become the Jewish religion." The problem with this is that all is *not* said and done, history is *not* over, the Karaites are still around, and if their numbers are minuscule, so are those of Rabbanite Jews (especially those who pay any attention to rabbinic law) in comparison with two groups that history—or is it God?—has favored more abundantly, Christians and secularists. The Hegelian notion that history has always moved in a positive direction, and the kindred notion of Social Darwinism that those who have survived are fittest, have often been used against the Jews. It is jarring to see a Jewish theologian, especially after the Holocaust, still relying on the old Breslau school of religious historicism.

Jacobs' confidence in historical tradition as defining what is normative is characteristically British. It recalls nothing so much as Viscount Falkland's famous statement in the seventeenth century that "when it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change." Though this approach is logically and theologically flimsy everywhere, in the British context it may have more force than in America. Here the historical difference between the two Jewries is illuminating. As Jacobs points out, "in nineteenth-century America, if you wanted to be 'American' you had to be a Reform Jew, whereas to be an 'English' Jew at that time you had to be Orthodox." A hundred years later, though both communities are mostly nonobservant, (nominal) Orthodoxy is still the norm in Britain, as are Reform and Conservative in the United States. A practice based on local

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tradition, independently of its theological warrant, means something very different in the two countries.

THE ISSUE OF homosexual conduct is a case in point. In explaining his objections to American Reform Judaism (and its closest British counterpart, Liberal Judaism), Jacobs correctly argues that "homosexual relationships [cannot be] made 'kosher' because the two persons concerned love one another," since "according to Jewish values not every ethical question can be decided on the basis of love." Here one must resist the ubiquitous and depressing tendency in these liberal movements by which "opinions voiced in the general progressive media become *the* Jewish view." The more general point, of which the liberal Jewish embrace of homosexual behavior is only symptomatic, is that "If Jewish standards depend on what is considered to be ethical in each particular age, this can only mean that there are no fixed Jewish ethical standards." In the American context, however, the identification of Judaism with progressivism more often than not *is* the received tradition, and the traditional idea that halakhah overrides private conscience and sentiment—an idea with which, as we have seen, Jacobs has his own difficulty—is robust only within the small circle of Orthodox Jews. It is hard to believe that the same process will not eventually overtake British Jewry as well, if it has not already.

In this connection, the rapid capitulation of the non-Orthodox movements to the liberal Zeitgeist on most issues involving sex and gender is instructive. Needless to say, Jewish law regulates sexuality to a high degree, and gender is one of the central structuring features of the whole halakhic system. But today, outside of Orthodoxy, the traditional laws on these matters tend to be articulated and observed only to the extent that they conform to the ethos of contemporary liberalism. One need only consider the growing demand for the normalization of homosexual behavior even in the Conservative Movement, or the consensus outside of Orthodoxy that abortion, which halakhah allows only in rare circumstances, should be seen as a private option and made available to all women. These examples suggest that what Jacobs terms "the minutiae of Jewish law" are more important than he realizes. For, with a few laudable exceptions, it is only those who observe the "minutiae" who uphold the traditional view in the great moral debates of our time (of which homosexuality and abortion are surely two).

The incivility, ignorance, and irrationality of the attacks on Jacobs from the right have elicited his convincing critiques of "fundamentalist supernaturalism," culminating in the impressive volume under review. It is too bad that he has not turned his enormous intellectual gifts to the same degree against those who stand to his left. For, although they are usually kinder and gentler in demeanor, they are also more numerous and more influential and pose a threat of their own to Judaism and to the moral health of society at large.

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***Reviewed by* Daniel J. Mahoney**

THE MODERN WORLD'S landscape is marked by two seemingly inexorable and contradictory processes: on the one hand, the emergence of unprecedented state power, claiming competence over ever greater domains of human life; on the other, the rise of a self-assertive "society" aiming to liberate the individual from traditional moral, social, and political restraints. For three centuries, this tug-of-war between growing state power and societal self-assertion has proceeded apace. It has become the unavoidable subject matter of modern social and political theory.

Thinkers on both the left and right have attacked the legitimacy of political command, upholding the integrity of the individual and society against the encroachments of the state even as the state stubbornly refuses to wither away. The left's chosen instrument for liberating the individual from what Marx called the

DANIEL J. MAHONEY *is associate professor of Political Science at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts. He is presently completing a book entitled* Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: The Ascent from Ideology.

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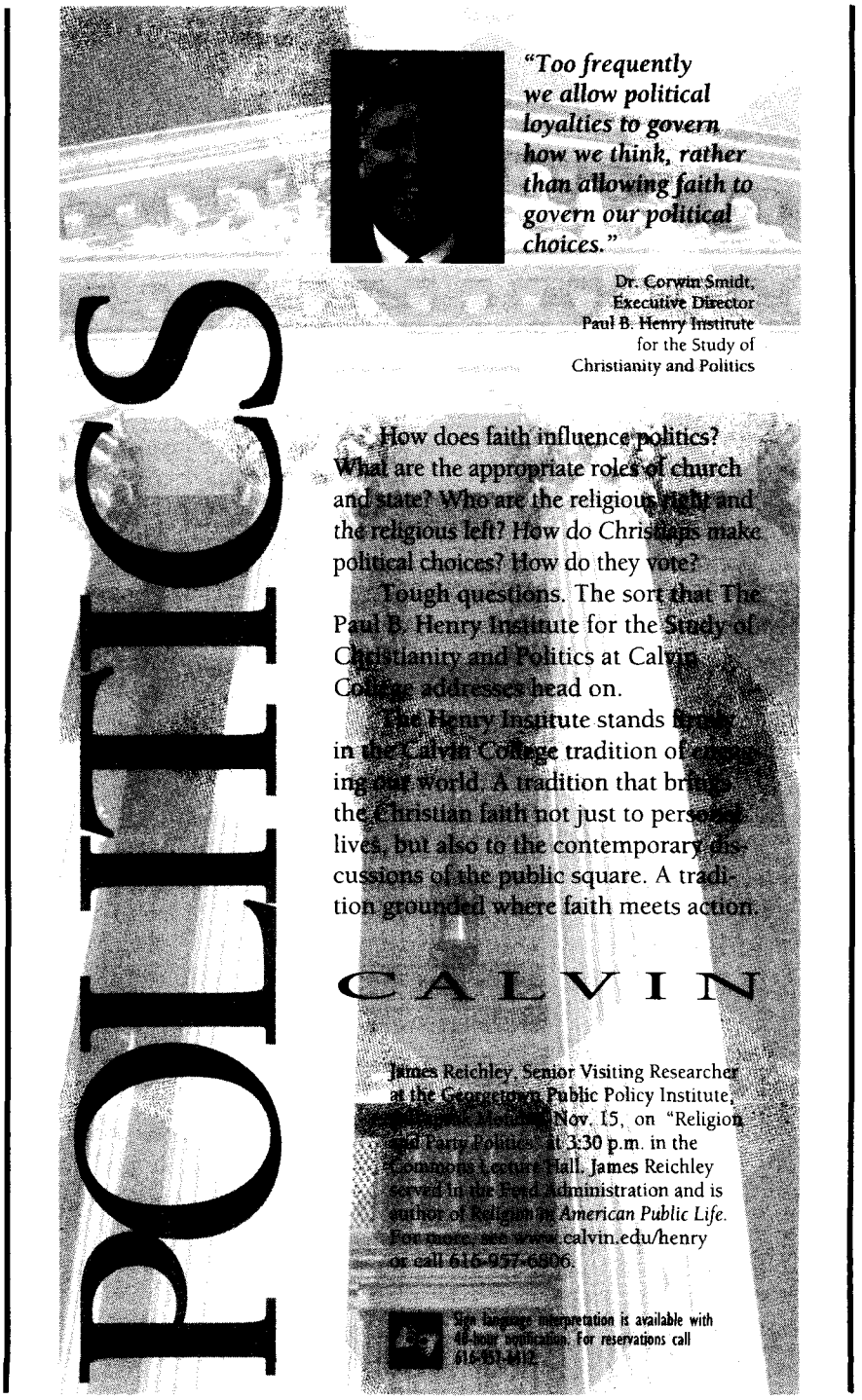
"alien powers" of domination and exploitation has been revolution. And as Irving Louis Horowitz correctly observes in his important new book *Behemoth*, revolutionary activism has turned out to be the principal instrument for the expansion of the Leviathan state in the twentieth century. Radically antistatist and antipolitical in its basic presuppositions, Marxism became the ideological justification par excellence by which "states trump societies" in the twentieth century.

On the right, theorists such as Friedrich Hayek defended classical liberalism and the integrity of the market against the claims for state power made in the name of "social justice" and economic equity. Hayek certainly paid more attention than Marx to the political preconditions of a free society. Through such works as *The Constitution of Liberty* and his trilogy on *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, Hayek made an enduring contribution to contemporary political philosophy.

But in truth, neither Hayek nor any other prominent contemporary partisans of classical liberalism have shed much light on the subtle mutual dependence and interpenetration of state and society in modern times. For classical liberals, the fact that the state is utilized time and again to "liberate" the individual from perceived constraints or injustices says little or nothing about the inadequacies of individualist philosophy or its dialectical connection with collectivism. Hayekian liberalism is ultimately too individualist to appreciate what Alexis de Tocqueville and Bertrand de Jouvenel saw with emblematic clarity: individualism erodes the intermediate associations and spiritual authorities that are the principal obstacles to the triumph of the omnicompetent state.

What we need, then, is an authoritative guide to the problem of state and society that avoids both Marxist and libertarian illusions. That is precisely what Irving Louis Horowitz has provided in *Behemoth*. This book chronicles "statists, revolutionists, and individualists" in the period between 1748, the publication date of Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*, right up through contemporary debates on communitarianism, "the clash of civilizations," and the status of the welfare state. It sheds light on the inability of modern political and social theory to explain either the mutual growth of statism and individualism or the enduring presence of the state itself, an entity whose very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legitimacy is challenged by powerful intellectual currents on the left and right alike.

It is not that Horowitz is a statist in any ideological sense of the term. The author of a classic examination of genocide and state power, *Taking Lives*, and one of the few authorities on Cuban communism not to be taken in by the fraudulent claims of Caribbean Stalinism, Horowitz has solid antitotalitarian credentials. But it is precisely his antitotalitarianism that led Horowitz to appreciate the fundamental importance of politics in shaping a state and society compatible with human liberty and dignity. The alternative to a totalitarian state (or an antinomian society, for that matter), Horowitz argues, can be found in a liberal constitutional order undergirded by decent laws and social mores. Horowitz is a political sociologist who recognizes that the human condition remains inescapably political—there is no substitute for sober reflection on the specific institutional and social arrangements that support responsible human freedom.

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ON ONE LEVEL, *Behemoth* is an account of the remarkable inattention to political analysis and judgment in modern social and political theory. In a manner reminiscent of Raymond Aron, Horowitz challenges the sociological prejudice that modern social conditions have rendered politics obsolete. For many sociologists, politics is an elite activity which falsely presupposes that human beings can reflect on and self-consciously influence their destinies. Social theorists embrace a sociological determinism that denies any role for the human element—and thus for the social theorist himself. Both Aron and Horowitz capture a remarkable paradox of modern sociological reflection: as the state's power to affect the well-being of the individual and society has increased exponentially, important tendencies of modern thought have denied any genuine autonomy to political thought and action.

Horowitz's account of this tradition of sociological reductionism is not only historical and descriptive but also deeply prescriptive. He turns for his antidote to thinkers who grasped the causal efficacy of politics—Montesquieu, Tocqueville, and Weber in particular. Montesquieu, for example, believed that the political regime was the most important of the multiple factors that govern men, that shape, as he famously put it, "the spirit of the laws." Tocqueville in turn held that modern "democracy," with its growing "equality of conditions" and its formal acceptance of the "sovereignty of the people," could take liberal or despotic political forms depending upon the prudence of men. Weber, despite nationalist and Nietzschean aspects of his thought (which Horowitz perhaps underplays), hoped to defend personal independence and political liberty within the "iron cage" of an ever more bureaucratized and rationalized society. Weber's political sociology sought to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate "domination" in a strange fusion of constitutionalist and power-political concerns.

Each of these three great "sociological liberals" knew that the state would not wither away, and hence that serious reflection had to be given to taming it. In Horowitz's view, each aimed at finding a principled mean "between anarch and behemoth" and kept alive a sense of Aristotelian moderation in an intellectual world given alternatively to romantic revolutionary posturing and irresponsible reactionary nostalgia. Montesquieu, Tocqueville and Weber are *Behemoth*'s heroes, although the iconoclastic Horowitz is a disciple of none of them. In any case he is certainly right that any effort to renew the tradition of political sociology must draw on the sobriety and liberality of Montesquieu and Tocqueville as well as on Weber's realistic appraisal of power and legitimacy in the modern world.

BEHEMOTH IS in no way a dry academic survey of the history and theory of political sociology. In addition to penetrating discussions of a range of classic theorists, from Montesquieu and Hegel to Durkheim and Weber, it contains lively readings of such contemporary or near-contemporary thinkers as Joseph Schumpeter, the Frankfurt School's Max Horkheimer, Hannah Arendt, and Amitai Etzioni and the so-called "communitarians." No reader will agree with every detail of these interpretations and some are undoubtedly more inspired than others.

The reading of Arendt is one of the

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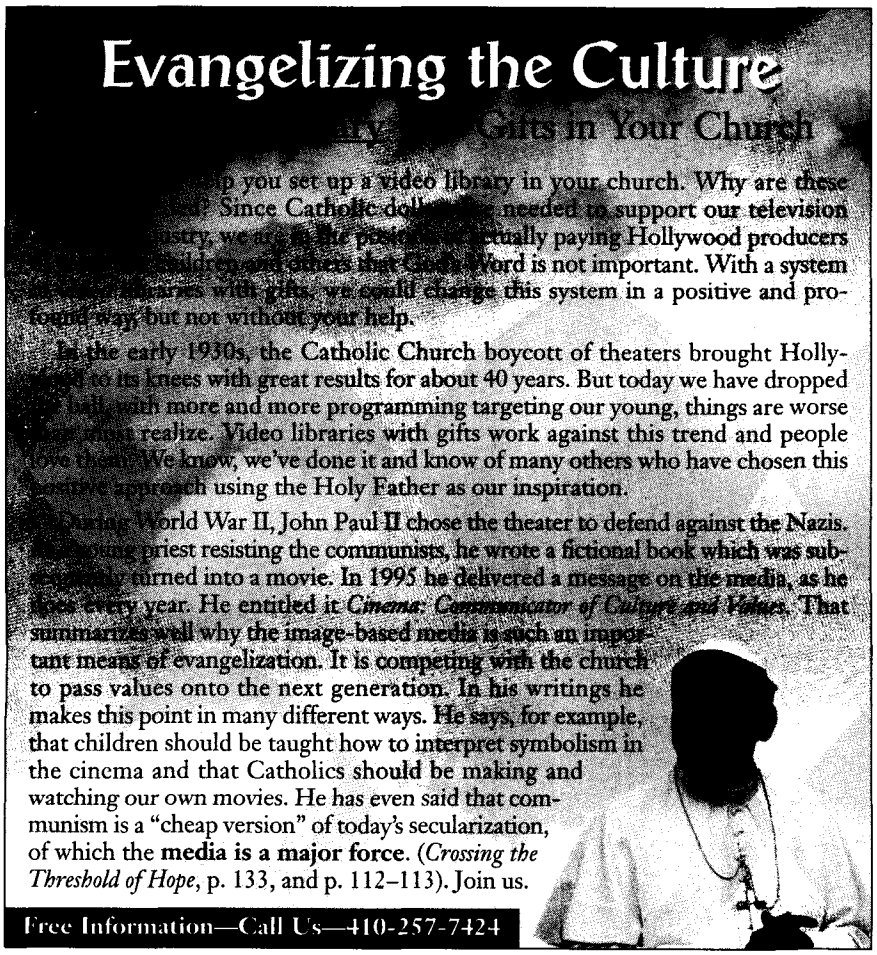
very best, a masterpiece of concision and equity. Horowitz is aware of Arendt's characteristic defects: her propensity for rhetorical overkill, her excessive love of paradox, and her romantic ambivalence toward liberalism and liberal society. On the other hand, he does justice to her contribution to political understanding in such works as *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *On Revolution*, and assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the controversial *Eichmann in Jerusalem* with admirable equanimity. A philosophically minded social scientist, Horowitz makes astute observations about Arendt's unfinished trilogy on *The Life of the Mind*. There is some irony in the central role that Arendt plays in this account of political sociology, given her contempt for a discipline that she believed intrinsically reductionist. But Horowitz draws suggestively on Arendt's analyses of statism, revolution, Judaism, and philosophy without succumbing to the pathos or romanticism (i.e., her cult of classical republicanism) that she too often used as a club with which to beat constitutional liberalism—the only real alternative to Behemoth today.

Horowitz also exposes the pretenses of contemporary communitarianism. Presenting itself as an alternative to liberalism, in practice it is usually just liberalism's unselfconscious cousin, preaching soft community in the guise of a hardheaded revival of ancient virtue. In their one-sided emphasis on civil society, communitarians often forget the complex imperatives of governance in a commercial republic. Communitarianism, at its best, expands the horizon of liberalism by reminding liberals of the moral preconditions of freedom; at its worst, it is a facile substitute for sustained political reflection on the institutional requirements of liberty and virtue in the modern world.

HOROWITZ CONCLUDES *Behemoth* with a timely reminder that the welfare state won't go away. He is less an advocate of big government than a partisan of a prudent or conservative welfare state that respects the need for entrepreneurial innovations and individual initiatives. But, above all, he is a careful student of the inevitable complicity of state and society within modernity. Horowitz addresses this complexity primarily through an analysis of how the dialectic of state and society relates to state tyranny and to issues of political economy. But I would argue that the dialectic of state and society, the mutual dependence of individualism and collectivism, has ramifications even deeper than Horowitz suggests, ramifications that can be explored with the help of political *philosophy*.

Both state and society are instruments for promoting the welfare of the individual, that specific construction of modern moral and political life. Hobbes famously gave an account of the individual in a "state of nature" shorn of all antecedent moral and political obligations. The modern (welfare) state, while cooperating with the market to meet the economic and social needs of the individual, loudly proclaims his autonomy in all things related to his personal life. This moral individualism paradoxically leads to state coercion as the state increasingly undermines those mediating institutions, such as the church and family, that restrain and guide human freedom by giving it content.

Inspired by Irving Louis Horowitz's analysis, the student of political philosophy must go beyond the frontiers of political sociology to explore the connections between statism, individualism, and antinomianism in our time.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to pass values onto the next generation. In his writings he
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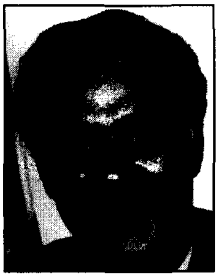

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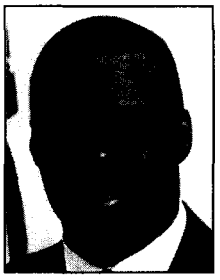

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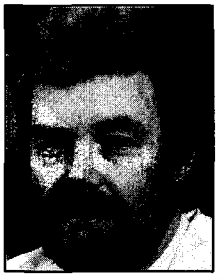

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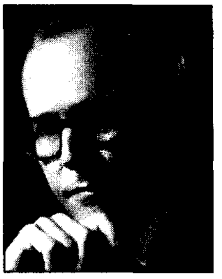

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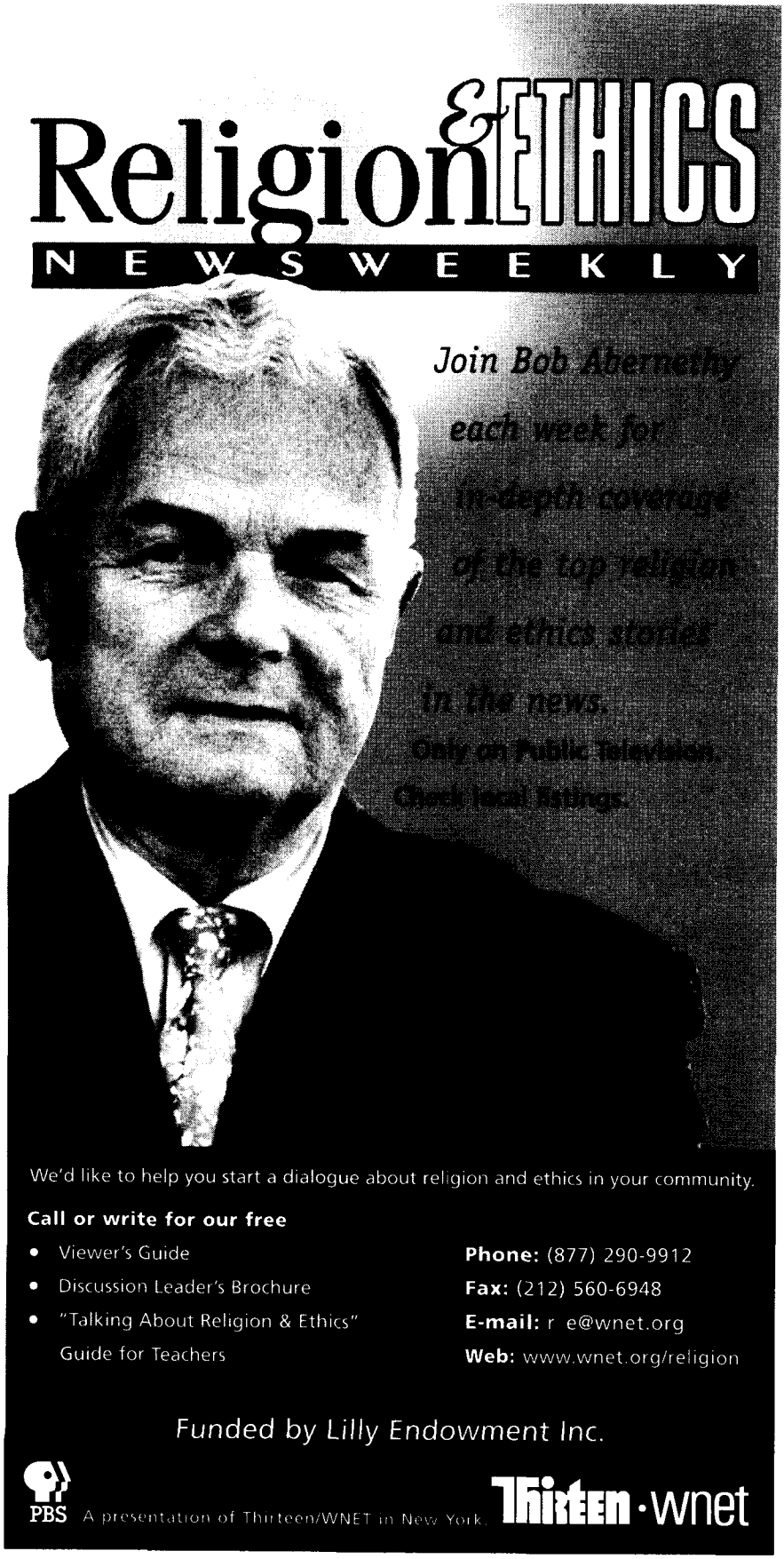
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In the Tradition . . . Sort Of

MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH: A JEWISH APPROACH TO MODERN MEDICAL ETHICS. By ELLIOT N. DORFF. *Jewish Publication Society. 456 pp. $34.95.*

***Reviewed by* David Novak**

THE FACT THAT the now regular advances in biomedical technology affect the lives of everybody in our society in new, unprecedented ways has made biomedical ethics a conversation in which many different voices are striving to be heard. Philosophers want to be heard in order to show others that theoretical ethics offers clarity and direction for dealing with real moral dilemmas. Theologians want to show others that their religious traditions speak to the concerns of the present. Jewish theologians are no different. Indeed, Jews have a special historical need to show themselves and others that the Jewish tradition can thrive outside any ghetto of time or place.

Elliot N. Dorff is rector of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, a long time member of Conservative Judaism's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, and an official representative of Conservative Judaism on a number of U.S. government commissions—which is to say he is a leading philosopher and theologian of that major branch of contemporary Judaism. In this book, he addresses a variety of important issues in biomedical ethics from his standpoint within Conservative Judaism, a standpoint which, as he candidly notes, is sometimes not that of other members of his community.

Dorff is on top of both the classical Jewish sources with their modern

DAVID NOVAK *holds the J. Richard and Dorothy Shiff Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto.*

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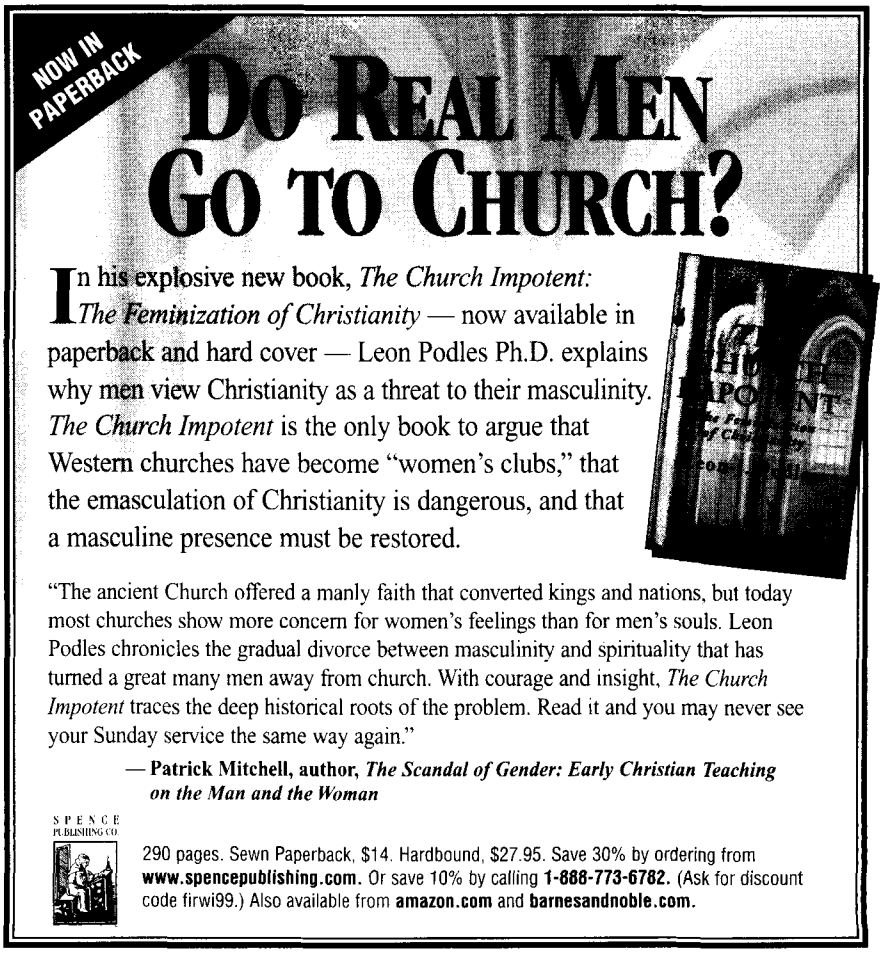
interpretations and the vast biomedical and legal literature, yet he is epistemically humble. He does not presume to present *the* Jewish point of view, which, because of Judaism's current fragmentation, is not something anyone can honestly pretend to do. Dorff hopes to persuade his fellow Conservative Jews to accept his specific conclusions, then persuade other, non-Conservative, Jews to accept his Conservative approach to the Jewish tradition because it offers a better interpretative application of the tradition as a whole than do the Reform or Orthodox alternatives. Finally, Dorff hopes to persuade morally serious non-Jews that some of his interpretations of the Jewish tradition offer rationally cogent guidance for them.

On many issues, Dorff's approach has firm grounding in the Jewish tradition. He uses the classical sources skillfully and clearly shows just how, and often why as well, those committed to the Jewish tradition must be opposed to practices that many others in both the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds have accepted as morally valid. Thus, in his treatment of abortion, he states that "by and large the Jewish tradition *prohibits* abortion." This is stated in the context of a discussion of the various dispensations from this prohibition when the life or health of the mother is at stake, dispensations that could justify only a very small percentage of the abortions in our society. The Jewish tradition is essentially pro-natal, a position Dorff suggests needs emphasis now when the Jewish birthrate is so dangerously low. Dorff courageously takes this stand against the dominant position of the laity in Conservative Judaism, most of whom follow the current liberal position that abortion is a woman's right, subject to no moral restrictions.

Dorff takes another nuanced, traditional, yet courageous stand on the question of euthanasia (and the related issue of physician-assisted suicide). While recognizing situations where futile extensions of a terminally ill human life are to be avoided, Dorff makes it clear that "according to Judaism God created and therefore owns the entire universe, including each person's body, and we therefore do not have the right unnecessarily to destroy or damage God's property.... We each have a fiduciary responsibility to God to preserve our life and health." Many Conservative Jews, by contrast, see their lives as theirs to do with as they choose, again without any moral restrictions.

Yet, in puzzling fashion, Dorff abandons his traditionalist reasoning when he gets to the subject of human sexuality, specifically homosexuality. Dorff argues that the ban on homosexual acts, male or female, should be abrogated on "moral grounds." This is a truly radical position, since Jews have always understood the ancient ban on homosexual acts as scriptural in origin, hence immutable. Lifting the ban would be what the rabbis called "uprooting a whole body from the Torah"; no Jew who hears the Torah read in the synagogue could possibly think it valid Jewish teaching.

Indeed, a Jew is supposed to die rather than perform a homosexual act, a stricture that applies to almost no other transgression. Furthermore, the prohibition of homosexual acts is one of the seven "Noahide" commandments, those acts that are considered binding on all humankind. As another talmudic passage notes, even the decadent Romans were not so decadent as to formalize homosexual unions, something that Dorff suggests modern Jews ought to do. While certain other scripturally based prohibitions—those pertaining to bastards,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RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
Editor-in-Chief

for example—have been qualified by subsequent tradition, no one in the Jewish tradition has ever tried to qualify the prohibition on homosexuality, let alone question its validity. It is not too much to say that as far as the Jewish tradition is concerned, it would be easier to permit a Jew to eat pork on the fast day of Yom Kippur than it would be to permit a Jew to engage in a homosexual act. This prohibition, like that of idolatry, is exceptionless. As the Dorff of the other chapters might argue, the same God who tells us what we may do and not do with our lives also tells us what we may do and not do with our genitals.

Rabbi Dorff knows this as well as any other Jewish scholar. Yet he is relentless in his opposition to this prohibition and all its ramifications. At this point, one must raise questions not only about his grounds for radically deviating from the Torah and its tradition on this issue but, more basically, about the adequacy of his general theological position.

IN EXPLAINING WHY he views the ban on homosexuality as immoral, Dorff writes that it is "downright cruel. . . . I, for one, cannot believe that the God who created us all produced a certain percentage of us to have sexual drives that cannot be legally expressed under any circumstances. That is simply mind-boggling—and, frankly, un-Jewish. . . . It is Christian to see human beings as endowed with urges that should ideally be forever suppressed." It is necessary to unpack this highly charged statement in order to show why this part of Dorff's book is so objectionable on both theological and philosophical grounds.

To begin with, Dorff seems to think that our sexual orientation (experienced as our "urges") is something indelible, and that any attempt to suppress it or change it is either impossible or destructive of one's personhood. It is, in his view, like not letting a left-handed person use the left hand and making him use the right hand instead. Along these lines, following the famous 1973 pronouncement of the American Psychiatric Association (to which he ascribes more authority than he does the whole Jewish tradition on this point), Dorff refuses to consider homosexual orientation as a disease that ought to be subjected to therapeutic intervention. (The vaguely defined condition known as "homophobia" now seems to have replaced homosexuality as the disease to be treated.)

To say that homosexuality is biologically indelible is to deny a fundamental teaching of Judaism about the normal prevalence and power of free choice, which Maimonides argued is the human presupposition for being addressed by commandments at all. For traditional Judaism, the possibility of choice requires cultivating proper virtues and character traits. God does not give commandments that rational persons cannot keep.

All the arguments Dorff makes for permitting homosexual acts could be made in cases of alcoholism, drug addiction, indeed any compulsive state of human being that gives the person suffering from it and acting on it immediate pleasure. The difference is that in Dorff's social milieu active homosexuals now seem to be socially acceptable, whereas alcoholics and drug addicts are still sent to psychotherapists. But a Judaism that accepts homosexual unions and is even willing to formalize them is so far removed from historic Jewish culture that it is doubtful it can survive with its Jewish identity intact. That is a question Dorff's fellow Conservative Jews need to ask themselves when reading this book.

DORFF'S ALLEGED OPPOSITION between Judaism and Christianity on this point is also questionable, since Christian sexual morality is rooted in Judaism. That being the case, one might as well blame traditional Christian opposition to homosexual acts (and compassion for those suffering

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homosexual desire) on the Jews. It is often argued that Christians have based their sexual norms on a severe body/soul opposition that reflects the unfortunate influence of Platonic dualism. But Judaism has also been heavily influenced by Platonic dualism, which shows itself in the two main forms of medieval Jewish theology: Maimonidean rationalism and kabbalistic mysticism. One should not dismiss traditional norms because one does not agree with some philosophical explanations of them. The rule always has priority over what is inferred to be its reason. As the Talmud puts it, "We do before we fully understand." The task of theologians is to think of better reasons than did their predecessors for observing the commandments.

Dorff's remark about Christian moral teaching could imply that being Jewish is essentially being not-Christian, and that everything Christians believe Jews should disbelieve. The fact is that Jews and Christians have great *theological* differences (fundamentally about Jesus); their differences are neither philosophical nor ethical. To locate differences at the wrong level is to commit a most serious category error.

One sees why Dorff has gotten himself on a collision course with the Jewish tradition on sexuality when one looks at his theological premises, which he sets forth (too) briefly in an appendix at the very end of the book. He writes, "Religions create communities committed to their ideologies. . . . These features make religion a powerful and popular way to speak about reality and to guide important decisions of life." Dorff's problem can be seen in his choice of the word *ideology*. It is a very modern word, and as Leo Strauss taught us, "ideology" is what falls between theology and philosophy. It is arbitrarily constructed, not intending nature as does philosophy, and not intending revelation as does theology—and thus lacking the strength of either discipline.

It is because of his equation of religion and ideology that Dorff cannot relate coherently to the authority of the Jewish tradition. Despite all his talk of "our tradition," by refusing to acknowledge an authoritative revelation underlying the tradition, Dorff can only look upon that tradition sentimentally, that is, using it when it conforms to his morality and just as easily discarding it when it doesn't. He seems to prefer the *feel* of tradition and its modes of discourse to its actual content. Like so many modern theologians, Dorff does not seem to recognize a God who says "no." A

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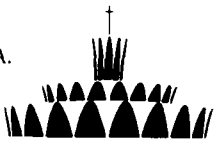

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religious tradition has real authority only when it is taken to be the legitimate interpretation by a community of what it understands as God's word. But for Dorff, morality clearly "trumps" the tradition, which is the line Reform Judaism has taken since its inception early in the nineteenth century.

DORFF TRIES in a number of places to distinguish himself from the antinomianism of Reform Judaism, an antinomianism that is also untraditional. The great liberal (or "Reform") Jewish thinkers, such as the philosopher Hermann Cohen or the rabbi Leo Baeck, saw the priority of ethics over law in Judaism, but by ethics they meant traditional Jewish morality, for which they argued with philosophical rigor and rich theological citation. Today's Reform Judaism has waffled on the issue of homosexuality, and without much philosophical justification, let alone theological citation. In place of morality and ethics, we find only the mores and ethos of our day.

Elliot Dorff's difference from Reform Judaism is one of degree rather than kind, even if for institutional reasons he cannot admit it. Whether his fellow Conservative Jews have arrived at the same point remains to be seen. In the meantime, those Jews looking to the Jewish tradition for authority, and those non-Jews looking to that tradition for guidance, will have to look to Jewish orthodoxy, in one form or another, for views that correspond to the teachings revealed in the Torah and coherently interpreted and applied by those who have faithfully handed on its truth.

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Metaphysics Matters

IN DEFENSE OF NATURAL LAW. By ROBERT P. GEORGE. *Clarendon/Oxford University Press. 343 pp. $65.*

***Reviewed by* Phillip E. Johnson**

IN HIS INFLUENTIAL BOOK *The Selfish Gene*, Richard Dawkins asserts that "Like successful Chicago gangsters our genes have survived . . . in a highly competitive world, . . . [and so] a predominant quality to be expected in a successful gene is ruthless selfishness." Therefore, "We are survival machines—robot vehicles programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes." One might expect from this creation story that Dawkins would repudiate all notions of morality or free will, but not so. Like a Calvinist preacher denouncing the wiles of Satan, he exhorts his readers to robot rebellion. "Let us try to *teach* generosity and altruism, because we are born selfish. Let us understand what our own selfish genes are up to, because we may then at least have the chance to upset their designs, something that no other species has ever aspired to."

The logical disconnection between Dawkins' scientific (or pseudoscientific) explanation of human nature and his moral exhortation may be used to illustrate the starting point for the new natural law philosophy of Germain Grisez, John Finnis, and several others (hereafter collectively designated Grisez-Finnis), which Robert P. George defends in the essays collected in the book under review. At one time the Catholic natural law philosophy of Thomas Aquinas and his followers dominated European thinking, but its metaphysical foundations were undermined as science replaced Aristotelian teleology and Catholic theology with a materialist worldview that considers only efficient causes. The project of Grisez-Finnis is to save natural law by reestablishing it on a secular foundation that does not appeal directly to those metaphysical claims that modern science rejects as outdated.

EVEN AN EXTREME scientific materialist such as Dawkins has to acknowledge that there is such a thing as moral knowledge, and that it cannot come from science because we cannot derive "ought" from "is." To avoid allowing the selfish genes to set the moral agenda, Dawkins states a basic proposition that he apparently regards as self-evident—essentially the Golden Rule—and then hastily drops the subject because to develop that line of thought further would undermine his whole project. Just by hinting at the existence of moral knowledge, Dawkins gives us reason to doubt that we actually do live in a world ruled by gangster genes. In such a world honest teachers (if there

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were any) would be telling their students that a pretense of morality is merely a stratagem by which one gangster induces others to enter into temporary alliances, or cozens some gullible victim to lower his guard.

Grisez-Finnis likewise begin with self-evident first principles that are not derived from any factual propositions about human nature. First, Grisez-Finnis describe some basic human goods, the irreducible categories of things for which it is rational to strive. These have been formulated in different ways, but a typical list would cite life (including health, safety, and procreation); knowledge (including appreciation of beauty); holiness or religion (in the sense of harmony with ultimate reality); self-integration, justice, friendship (including marriage); and the kind of exercise of skill in work or play that enriches human life. Deliberately missing from this list are such goods as money, which is merely instrumental to achieving more basic goods, and pleasure, which is to be sought not as an end in itself but as a benefit incidental to a rational end, in the way that sexual pleasure is achieved through marriage. Human action is rational when it pursues one or more of the basic human goods, which are "irreducible" and "incommensurable." This means that they do not arise from any supposedly more fundamental good and there is no common standard by which one could value them for purposes of exchange.

The basic goods are supplemented by moral principles, sometimes called "modes of responsibility." The first of these is that we are to strive for integral human fulfillment, meaning that we should lead coherent lives that give each of the basic goods its due. Other important principles are the Golden Rule, which forbids selfishness, and what Grisez-Finnis call the Pauline Principle, which forbids deliberately sacrificing any one of the basic goods to another—i.e., doing evil that good may result. Each of the basic goods must be given its due, and not treated as subordinate to any other good. The new natural law thus contrasts sharply with utilitarianism, which reduces every human satisfaction to the single basic category of pleasure.

The writings of Grisez, Finnis, and their collaborators have been greeted by a barrage of criticism, which is why Professor George has written over three hundred pages of essays in their defense. Much of the criticism comes from scholars of distinction who are favorable to natural law in principle, but who think that the Grisez-Finnis system is not really natural law (because it does not rest on factual propositions about human nature), or that some of its basic propositions are far from self-evident, or that its logic is so convoluted that it tends to turn even the easiest problems into moral dilemmas.

Before getting to the criticisms, however, let us pause to appreciate the worthy goals of the enterprise. I respect the effort to develop natural law principles in terms that might win approval in a secularized age, where a supposedly value-free science holds the epistemological high cards. Some things really are self-evidently good, including the Golden Rule, and there are a variety of fundamentally good things which cannot be reduced to a single measure (such as pleasure). It is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied, and a philosophy that can't explain why isn't much good. Besides, nurturing the qualities of Socrates is the best way to achieve the satisfactions that are cherished by a truly rational being. Proceeding in this way enables us to connect the private good of individuals with the common good of the community, unlike liberal theories of justice that consider only "rights."

Those sentiments qualify me as a friend to natural law, and yet I share some of the common misgivings with respect to the specific Grisez-Finnis system. Their strong version of the incommensurability thesis has a way of turning easy questions into baffling dilemmas, with its ban on "trade-offs" even in situations where common sense seems to require them. For example, the legal philosopher George Wright argued that by this sys-

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tem it is difficult to know whether a golfer who sees a child drowning in a pond should interrupt his game to rescue the child, since he would be sacrificing one basic good (play) for another (life). George responds that "the Pauline Principle is only one norm among a set of moral norms that may guide choice in such situation. Another member of that set is the Golden Rule, and it is *this* norm that (most obviously) governs the golfer's choice by defeating his reason not to spend the time required to save the tot." No doubt that is the right answer, but it seems to follow in spite of the distinctive features of the Grisez-Finnis system rather than because of them. If I knew someone who was pondering a moral difficulty, I would not encourage him to decide what to do by employing a system that provides so many opportunities for confusion and rationalization.

ANOTHER COMMON CRITICISM is that Grisez-Finnis often seem to think that everything can be decided by abstract principles, without regard to the facts or to competing considerations. The most obvious example is the ban on artificial contraception and on inherently non-procreative sexual acts, even when engaged in by married couples. According to George (and his coauthor Gerard V. Bradley, in their essay "Marriage and the Liberal Imagination"), it is proper for sterile married couples to enjoy sexual pleasure even though conception is impossible, but it is wrong for fertile married couples to use artificial contraception or to engage in "sodomitical acts."

This distinction follows because marriage itself is a basic human good that is "consummated and actualized by sexual acts of the reproductive type" regardless of fertility. From this heavily fortified definitional base George and Bradley reason that sexual acts of the reproductive type typically further the good of marriage, and persons (whether married or not) who engage in sexual acts of the nonreproductive type "necessarily treat their bodies and those of their sexual partners (if any) as means or instruments in ways that damage their personal (and interpersonal) integrity."

That logic rests heavily on an argumentative definition, and it invites some obvious questions. Is there any objective way to determine whether the alleged damage to integrity has actually occurred? If the wife decided to refuse sexual relations to avoid the risk of annual pregnancies, might that damage the marital relationship more than engaging in sexual acts not of the reproductive type? Should any weight be given to the possibility that the wife (or husband, for that matter) could be freed by effective birth control to achieve other basic goods, such as knowledge or skill at play?

GEORGE AND BRADLEY'S strongest argument for their position on sexual morality relies upon tradition, including common law tradition. Not long ago, the idea that oral or anal sex is as natural as the reproductive kind would have been greeted with general disgust, and even legal disapproval. In the age of Clinton, we have come a long way. Is this progress or regress? George and Bradley concede that the distinguished legal philosopher Stephen Macedo (among many others) thinks the change is beneficial because he honestly fails to perceive what to them is self-evident. They don't blame Macedo personally for this defect, but they do say (in an endnote) that "This is not to say that the culture in which such failures of

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Married Catholic Priests?

What would happen when a married priest divorces? Are we ready to hear this announcement at Mass: "The special third collection today is for the parish Alimony Fund"?

— Patricia Dixon in our Jan. 1999 issue

Dialogue Is Not Possible

Whether explicitly or not, dissenters in the Catholic Church have accepted the worldview whereby certitude is not possible and no belief can be anything more than a reflection of the age in which it was formulated. In the end they recognize no authority except the Spirit of the Age. Given this worldview, attempts at rational discussion between orthodoxy and dissent are bound to fail.

— Prof. James Hitchcock in our Nov. 1998 issue

Why the Pope's Words Aren't Heeded

Fr. Francis Canavan has said, "Laws not only forbid certain actions, they must also state the penalty for committing them. *Nulla lex sine poena* — there is no law without a penalty." In 1987 in Los Angeles, Pope John Paul II said that dissent from Church teaching is not compatible with being a "good Catholic." Commendable words. But Fr. Richard McBrien smugly retorted that the Pope's words "will have no effect at all on Catholics in general." Sad to say, McBrien was right — because there's no law without a penalty. This is essentially the situation of the Church. We can point to many splendid teachings emanating from Rome, but in most cases the teachings are both unheeded and unenforced. This can't go on indefinitely. Something's gotta give. The public and obstinate dissent we witness today must be punished. The moment of truth is fast approaching for the Church.

— Editorial in our Oct. 1996 issue

The "Kazoo Mass"

I shall always remember the Mass that finally drove me out of the Catholic Church. Kazoos, whistles, and other noisemakers were distributed before Mass on the third Sunday in Lent. The Director of Religious Ed instructed us that this was the "Child-Within Liturgy" and we should all experience our inner child who was dying to get out. We were *commanded* to make noise during Mass. Cacophony arose in place of the Penitential Rite, and after my ears ceased ringing I realized that many previous Masses were also exercises in triviality. How could I forget the Bozo the Clown Mass or the Cowboy Bob liturgy? I had witnessed many deliberate attempts to destroy my Catholic culture and replace it with — well, I'm still not sure what. I was dying for hearty spiritual nourishment and was being fed pabulum. I was losing my Faith — which was everything to me. I believed I had to leave the Church before all semblance of Christianity left me.

— Mark J. Kelly in our May 1997 issue
(happily, as Kelly relates in his article, he was able to find his way back to the Catholic Church)

Dancing Girl on the Altar

I was shocked by the satirical ad for the *New Oxford Review* about "Father Bozo's" three-ring antics at Mass, entitled "When Will Father Bozo Go Back to the Circus?" I said to myself, "Yes, there are some liturgical abuses going on, but this ad is a wild exaggeration." Then, this past weekend I sat in horror as a grotesque liturgical dance was performed by a girl atop the altar where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated. It was then that I realized I was witnessing, precisely, three-ring liturgical antics. Enlist me in the cause!

— a letter to the Editor in our March 1999 issue

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understanding can honestly occur can come into being without culpable and bad faith rationalizations of morally corrupt dispositions and choices."

That statement deserves a much more prominent place in the argument. What were those culpable rationalizations, who invented them, and how did they become so influential as to mold the culture? Although they try to avoid calling attention to it, the new natural lawyers know very well that their project rests on metaphysical assumptions that the dominant scientific culture rejects. In an important 1987 article in the *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, Grisez, Finnis, and Joseph Boyle acknowledged in passing that "what we offer here presupposes many theses of metaphysics and philosophical anthropology—for example, that human intelligence is irreducible to material realities, that doing and making are irreducible to one another, that human persons and their actions are caused by an uncaused cause, and so on."

How, if at all, do Grisez-Finnis' metaphysical presuppositions square with what science tells us about our origins and our relationship to ultimate reality? Richard Dawkins merely states in unvarnished form doctrines that other scientific metaphysicians take for granted: In the beginning were the particles and the impersonal laws of physics; life evolved by a mindless, non-teleological process in which God played no part; and human beings are just another animal species. Human thoughts and actions are caused by synapses firing in the brain. To claim a special status for humans is to commit the sin of *speciesism*, a self-serving prejudice that could hardly arise in a culture without culpable rationalizations. I assume that Grisez-Finnis would concede that their system is insupportable if those widely held metaphysical presuppositions are true.

THESE ISSUES MUST be confronted. Aquinas was a great thinker because he successfully addressed the challenge to Christian thought that came from Aristotle and Averroes. Would we even remember Aquinas if he had ducked the challenge, and implied to his readers that Christians could afford to ignore it? Although one cannot go directly from "is" to "ought," an "ought" can and often does imply an "is." Metaphysics matters, and moral philosophy cannot afford to pretend that it doesn't.

The new natural law has established itself in a niche in a rarefied corner of the academic world, and this in itself was no easy accomplishment. If Grisez-Finnis mean to expand their influence out of that corner, they are going to have to persuade people to believe the assumptions about ultimate reality on which their enterprise rests.

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THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: A MORALITY IN A PROLOGUE, FOUR ACTS AND AN EPILOGUE. Composed by RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS. Performed by the Royal Opera House Orchestra and Chorus (Richard Hickox, conductor; Gerald Finley as the Pilgrim). *2 CD set: Chandos CHAN 9625. $32.97.*

No sex. Little violence. And the soprano doesn't die. Ralph Vaughan Williams didn't think that the critics would like his opera very much. And he was right. Their reviews of the 1951 premiere of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at London's Covent Garden were at best cool. And although a second production three years later in Cambridge received more positive responses, the work has been poo-pooed by critics and ignored by opera companies to this day. It's a shame. Vaughan Williams thought it was his greatest work. The great British conductor Sir Thomas Beecham agreed, and in 1972 conducted a magnificent recording of the work for the Angel label (SCL-3785). That LP set has long been unavailable, but Chandos has issued

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a new recording under the direction of Richard Hickox that almost achieves Beecham's standards in some areas while surpassing them in others. In writing the libretto, Vaughan Williams combined both parts of Bunyan's allegory into a single story into which he incorporated biblical passages and a crowd chorus written by his wife Ursula Wood. And although the action is streamlined and several of Bunyan's characters are either omitted or conflated (for instance, Pilgrim is a conflation of Bunyan's Christian and Faithful), the composer was careful not to change the character or tone of Bunyan's work. We meet Pilgrim and Evangelist, Pilgrim's friends Pliable, Timorous, and Obstinate, the demon Apollyon, Mr. By-Ends of Fair Speech, angels and servants of light, and the various folks who inhabit Vanity Fair where Pilgrim is tried and sentenced in the court of Lord Hate-Good. For these characters Vaughan Williams invents some of his most beautiful and deeply moving music. There are artfully constructed choruses and melodies so pristine that it's hard to believe that they are not true folk songs. And throughout the work Vaughan Williams shows a genius in setting English text—certainly in that area at least the work is unsurpassed. All of this combines into a powerful piece of theater and an insightful portrayal of the religious journey. It's a must-have CD set.

— Michael Linton

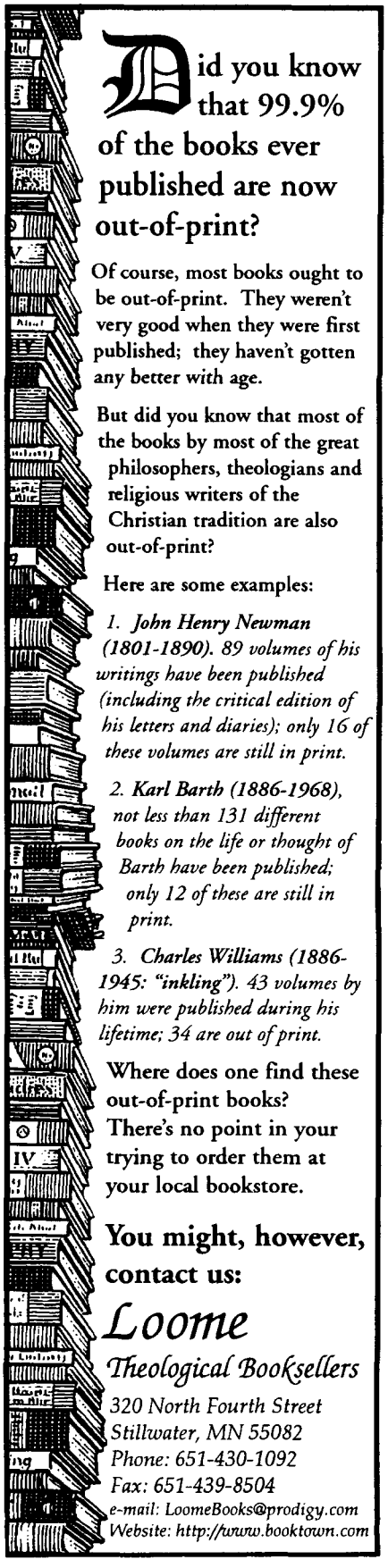
Not By Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right. By Sara Diamond. *Guilford. 280 pp. $23.95.*

In her fourth book—the culmination of a fifteen-year study of the "Christian Right"—Sara Diamond presents the movement with many of its quirks. But despite her knee-jerk leftism, Diamond displays a surprising admiration for an electoral bloc that, in spite of setbacks—even at the hands of a Congress largely in its debt, made up of many of its own—continues to endure. The magic, she finds, lies not necessarily in the political and institutional acumen of the movement's supporters, but in their relative independence from politics. *Not By Politics Alone* is not without flaws. Diamond's reliance on secondary sources makes the book read, at times, like a synopsis of back issues of the *Christian American*, the Christian Coalition's main periodical. She never really defines what she means by the "Christian Right," and does a disservice by lumping everyone on the right side of the political spectrum who purports to believe in Christ (from evangelicals and Catholics to Christian Reconstructionists), rarely even mentioning outreach and alliances with like-minded Jews. Her disproportionate treatment of such fringe voices as Randall Terry, and even murderers like Paul Hill, is downright unfair. Still, this is a mostly accurate, almost objective (ignoring her use of the description "simple-minded" once or twice) mini-history of a group whose electoral future is yet to be determined. And about that future, she warns her progressive friends: the Christian Right promises not only to endure, but to be strengthened by the efforts of grassroots social groups like the Promise Keepers toward, in particular, "racial reconciliation" efforts. The Christian Coalition may come and go, but so long as there is "an eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil" to be fought, Christian soldiers will march onward, and will be heard.

— Kathryn Jean Lopez

Basil in Blunderland. By Basil Cardinal Hume. *Paraclete. 62 pp. $12.95 paper.*

A little book issuing from the late cardinal's regular discussions with chil-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dren about the spiritual life. As the title indicates, for him, and for most of us, our experience of following Christ is more Blunderland than Wonderland. A winsome exercise that should engage not only the young in years.

WALKING SINCE DAYBREAK. By MODRIS EKSTEINS. *Houghton Mifflin. 258 pp. $27.50.*

This extraordinary book, subtitled "A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of Our Century," is by the author of the justly acclaimed *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age.* The present work is an elegantly written narrative with a powerful point. The point is that 1945 is rightly understood as the "zero hour" (*Stunde Null*) of Western Civilization, the very nadir that left no nation or people with clean hands. The narrative is the author's own story of his childhood in Latvia during World War II as the Baltics were once again, as had happened so often before, caught between Russia and Germany, attacked by two unspeakably bloody powers while the West, once again, was callously indifferent. Eksteins' father was a Baptist minister in Riga who had earlier traveled in the West, and the family escaped as displaced persons to Canada, where Eksteins now teaches at the University of Toronto. The story of the escape, of the vast migrations throughout Europe following the war, and of the experience of Germans under the Allied obliteration bombing of their cities makes for gripping reading. After reading *Walking Since Daybreak,* one may never think about World War II, the last so-called good war, or about Western Civilization in quite the same way. Highly recommended.

THE FLOWERING OF MYSTICISM: MEN AND WOMEN IN THE NEW MYSTICISM, 1200-1350. By BERNARD MCGINN. *Crossroad. 526 pp. $59.95 cloth, $24.95 paper.*

The third volume in an ambitious five-volume project, the first two being *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* and *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the Twelfth Century.* The "new mysticism" of the thirteenth century is closely related to the "democratizing" of adventuresome Christian piety, which is especially evident in the leadership of women, who are the chief subjects of the present book. An additional factor was the beginnings of the Franciscan and Dominican charisms, and the widespread influence of the "beguine mystics," notably in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands. Exhaustively documented with almost two hundred pages of notes, this volume, like its predecessors, is chary of commentary and narrative, but it reinforces the reputation of the author, who teaches at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, as the premier guide to Western mysticism.

XANTHIPPIC DIALOGUES. "Edited" by ROGER SCRUTON. *St. Augustine's Press (South Bend, Indiana). 277 pp. $29.95.*

Scruton, an academic philosopher and editor of the *Salisbury Review,* has "discovered" the long-lost dialogues of Xanthippe, wife of Socrates, in which, among other things, she explains to an embarrassingly inept Plato how he got her husband's thought, such as it was, quite totally wrong. First published in England, this wondrously learned and wickedly mischievous send-up caused a stir among the philosophically literate. Admittedly, it is a very British sort of thing, but those who have acquired the taste will not want to deny themselves the pleasure.

BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE: RELIGION AND EDUCATION IN MULTICULTURAL AMERICA. By JAMES W. FRASER. *St. Martin's Press. 267 pp. $24.95 paper.*

A professor of education at Northeastern University urges fellow liberals to a modest rethinking of public schools that does not leave concern for religion entirely to the enemy, meaning conservatives who believe in parental choice.

VOICES FROM THE CITY. By JOHN NUNES. *Concordia. 141 pp. $12.99 paper.*

A vigorous reaffirmation of preaching and ministry in the urban context. Nunes is a Lutheran with a keen ear and responsive heart for the voices of the city in both their exultant and wailing modes. His lucid statement of the good news of Christ will give encouragement to others who are called to bear witness, and not only in the city.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: A READER. Edited by GLEN H. STASSEN. *Pilgrim. 229 pp. $20.95 paper.*

The tilt—all right, so it is more than a tilt—is against capital punishment. But this collection also includes some effective argumentation that capital punishment is both morally legitimate and practically necessary. The editor helpfully divides the debate over justice into the categories of justice as retribution, justice as deterrence, and justice as fairness. The book is a helpful contribution to a debate that always has a bullish future.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Minding the Mind

The word-mavens—William Safire, for instance—routinely complain about the use of "intriguing" when "engaging," "fascinating," or just plain "interesting" would do as well. The complaint is justified. But intriguing is the right word to describe current discussions about the relationships between brain, mind, knowing, and consciousness. These discussions engage one's attention to a marked degree, and edge into the realm of mystery. At least they engage my attention and open my mind (using that word in the ordinary sense) to wonder. On these questions there are two new books that are to be warmly welcomed: John R. Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society: Philosophy in the Real World* (Basic) and Edward Pols, *Mind Regained* (Cornell University Press). There are basic agreements between them but equally basic disagreements, making the two in combination an excellent introduction to a set of questions of considerable significance for philosophy, ethics, religion, and theology. Both are written in a manner accessible to the educated reader with no specialized training in those several fields.

John Searle of the University of California at Berkeley is surely among the most respected philosophers of our time and writes regularly on science and philosophy in the *New York Review of Books*. Against the academically trendy postmodernists and deconstructionists, he declares himself to be a philosophical "realist." "Just to put my cards on the table at the beginning," he writes, "I accept the Enlightenment vision. I think that the universe exists quite independently of our minds and that, within the limits set by our evolutionary endowments, we can come to comprehend its nature." On the major philosophical issues, he subscribes to what he calls, borrowing a computer metaphor, "the default position," meaning by that the views we hold so naturally ("pre-reflectively") that it takes mind-bending effort to let oneself be argued out of them. The default position includes the belief that we have direct perceptual access to the world that exists independently of us; that words such as *tree* and *rabbit* typically have clear meanings that make it possible to talk about real objects in the world; that statements are typically true or false, depending on whether they correspond to determinable "facts in the world"; and that there are real relations in which one phenomenon, called the cause, accounts for another, called the effect.

Such views may seem pretty obvious, indeed commonsensical, to the sane reader. Searle, however, doesn't like the word commonsense, in part, it seems, because he doesn't want to insult those who disagree with him by suggesting they don't have it. But I'm not sure it helps to speak of the "default position," since the computer metaphor may suggest that there is something very wrong with their mental hardware. In any event, Searle's defense of human reason—what he calls the Enlightenment vision—is a salutary antidote to the fashionable irrationalities of Derrida, Foucault, Rorty, and a host of others who in various and implausibly ingenious ways contend that "reality" (in quotes) is something that we are making up as we go along. Most of *Mind, Language, and Society* is devoted to exposing the incoherence and frequent fatuities of the enemies of the Enlightenment vision.

Why does the "default position" of realism have so many enemies? "I do not believe that the various challenges to realism are motivated by the arguments actually presented," Searle writes. "I believe they are motivated by something much deeper and less intellectual." People resent being "subject to and answerable to a dumb, stupid, inert material world. Why shouldn't we think of the 'real world' as something we create, and therefore something that is

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answerable to us? If all of reality is a 'social construction,' then it is we who are in power, not the world."

Upon Closer Examination

Searle's is an interesting suggestion, but I am not sure it bears close examination. If the will to power is present in almost everything, and it is, it may help to explain the antirealist impulse. It probably does, at least in part, but a little further thought leads to the recognition that such power is itself a delusion and pretense—my fiction with which I contend against the fictions of others. If my supposed power has no relation to a real world independent of myself, I am totally powerless. What I call my socially constructed power is just whistling in the dark, and all my contentions with the constructions of others are finally no more than a whistling contest.

But in proposing this further consideration I may be assuming that the postmodernists are more self-critical than Searle thinks they are. He may have the more realistic assessment of their capacity for clear thinking. In any event, Searle recognizes that his psychological explanation of antirealism is not sufficient. "Pointing out the psychological origins of antirealism is not a refutation of antirealism. It would be a genetic fallacy to suppose that by exposing the illegitimate origins of the arguments against realism, we somehow refute the arguments."

Searle makes a bracing case for philosophical realism understood as the "Enlightenment vision." But like many, perhaps most, of those whom he calls "the educated members of our civilization at the turn of the millennium," intellectual inquiry stops at the edge of certain dogmatic boundaries. When it comes to some truths about "*how things really are* in the world" (emphasis his), we "are no longer dealing with matters of philosophical analysis" but with "the results of modern science." "As far as we know anything at all about how the world works, there are two propositions of modern science that are not, so to speak, up for grabs. They are not optional. . . . These are the atomic theory of matter and the evolutionary theory of biology." He does not make an argument for these propositions or dogmas; they are simply assumed by "the educated members of our civilization at the turn of the millennium." But of course these propositions have everything to do with "philosophical analysis," as we shall see in discussing Edward Pols' *Mind Regained.* The two dogmas as asserted by Searle determine his philosophical materialism, his understanding of cause and effect, and his atheism.

On these questions, Searle's is an engaging but thoroughly unconvincing instance of "beyondism." He says we are beyond the conflict between materialism and what he calls dualism, and then he opts for the default position of materialism. He says we are beyond the debate between atheism and theism, and then he opts for the default position of atheism. He even has a section titled "Beyond Atheism" in which he notes that earlier philosophers of his disposition, such as John Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell, thought it necessary to mount "polemical and eloquent attacks on traditional religion." That was then, this is now. "Nowadays nobody bothers, and it is considered in slightly bad taste to even raise the question of God's existence. Matters of religion are like matters of sexual preference: they are not to be discussed in public and even the abstract questions are discussed only by bores."

What the "Educated" Can Believe

Impatience with abstract questions might be viewed as a deficiency in a philosopher, especially one who proposes to explain *how things really are* in the world. The fact that Searle dismisses abstract questions about God as boring no doubt explains why he has not given serious attention to such questions, which he manifestly has not. The smugness and insularity of a world of discourse in which the following passage is presumably thought to be intellectually coherent would be cause for astonishment, were its kind not so frequently encountered. Searle writes:

> For us, the educated members of society, the world has become demystified. Or rather, to put the point more precisely, we no longer take the mysteries we see in the world as expressions of supernatural meaning. We no longer think of odd occurrences as cases of God performing speech acts in the language of miracles. Odd occurrences are just occurrences we do not understand. The result of this demystification is that we have gone beyond atheism to a point where the issue no longer matters in the way it did to earlier generations. For us, if it should turn out that God exists, that would have to be a fact of nature like any other. To the four basic forces in the universe—gravity, electromagnetism, weak and strong nuclear forces—we would add a fifth, the divine force. Or more likely, we would see the other forces as forms of the divine force. But it would still be all physics, albeit divine physics. If the supernatural existed, it too would have to be natural.

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"For us, the educated members of society." What a fine ring of invincible complacency that has. It is a phrase that Schleiermacher used almost two hundred years ago in describing "the cultured despisers of religion." Note also Searle's assertion that, no matter what turns out to be the case, it "would have to be a fact of nature like any other." That certitude has already been determined by the aforementioned dogmas that, as he says, are not up for grabs, and indeed are not subject to intellectual challenge or inquiry. The word "God" in Searle's discussion, needless to say, has nothing to do with what serious thinkers from Plato to Aquinas to Balthasar have meant by "God." But then, Searle has told us that those who think seriously about such questions are bores. Which presumably gives him license to be supremely unserious, as in the above paragraph that may kindly be described as non-sense.

I know nothing about John Searle's history, but there is a deep and evident animus at work here. Religion is no more than superstition and deserving of unbridled derision. His tone is that of the village atheist of yesteryear, now, one might have thought, almost an extinct species. For us, the educated members of society (if I may borrow a phrase), the vulgar exhibition of ignorance and hostility is an embarrassment. It is disconcerting to watch a distinguished professor of philosophy at a leading university as he thinks he is clinching an argument by pointing out that human credulity has played a part in religion. In Italy he lived near a church where a statue of Mary was found buried in a garden, and people used to believe (hee-hee) that it had fallen from heaven. That was then, this is now.

"Even if the statue were found in the gardens of the Vatican," Searle writes, "the church authorities would not claim it had fallen out of heaven. That is not a possible thought for us because, in a sense, we know too much." The "in a sense" is a nice qualifier, but it does not seem to qualify anything. Obviously, the statue's falling from heaven is "a possible thought" because John Searle thought it—not seriously, of course—in order to reject it. But his real clincher is the Shroud of Turin, the dating of which, according to radioactive tests, is still disputed. Whatever the right date, Searle concludes with this: "But, and this is the point, why do we assume the tests are more to be believed than the miracle? Why should God's miracle be answerable to carbon 14?" Simply at the level of Logic 101, it seems not to occur to Mr. Searle that the point of the tests is to determine whether it is a miracle, for if it is not a miracle there is no miracle to believe in or not believe in. Of course, we could have an interesting discussion about what is meant by a miracle. But we have already been told that people who discuss such things are bores, except, presumably, when Mr. Searle discusses them. If I understand him correctly, he believes he has the advantage in understanding such matters because he knows they are undeserving of serious thought. I think I mentioned that he is professor of philosophy at Berkeley, a school of no little renown.

Thinking About Our Thoughts

But I do not take back what I said earlier. *Mind, Language, and Society* is an intelligent argument for philosophical realism and a telling polemic against the antirealists, crippled only by an "Enlightenment vision" of a relentlessly dogmatic and reductionist force. The reductionist belief system within which Searle is constrained could not be more explicitly stated. In an intellectual world far removed from Searle's, the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote witheringly about a "God of the gaps" in which the word "God" is no more than a placeholder until we get a better explanation. John Searle subscribes to what we might call "philosophy of the gaps." Philosophy, he says, "is concerned with questions that we do not yet have an agreed-on method of answering." When science provides an answer, we will no longer need philosophy. "A good example of this is the problem of the nature of life. This was once a philosophical problem, but it ceased to be so when advances in molecular biology enabled us to break down what seemed a large mystery into a series of smaller, manageable, specific biological questions and answers. I hope that something similar will happen to the problem of consciousness."

For all the interesting things that John Searle has written about mind and consciousness, both here and elsewhere, his dogma so cripples his thought that, in principle, he cannot explore possibilities other than those with which he begins. His "Enlightenment vision" is, in fact, an iron cage. It would seem that his demystification has to end up in the mystification that all our thinking can in fact be broken down into something less than thought, which means we only think we think, or, more precisely, we have neither mind nor consciousness. There are neural firings in the brain that we call thoughts, but, if there are only neural firings, it becomes exceedingly difficult to know who or what are the "we" who call them thoughts. As Stephen M. Barr recently wrote in these pages, we should pay close attention to the best minds of our time, but we may be permitted to ignore them when they tell us they have no minds. It would seem that it is only by virtue of his inconsistencies—inconsistencies that, for the sake of his sanity, we may deem felicitous inconsistencies—that John Searle

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does not explicitly say that he has no mind at all. When, as he hopes, the mystery of mind and consciousness is broken down by science into a series of smaller, manageable, specific biological questions and answers, how would we know whether they are the right questions and answers, and what in this context would "knowing" mean? Mr. Searle's well-intended defense of realism finally evaporates into the mists of unreality.

Another Realism

A very different treatment of these questions is offered by Edward Pols, longtime professor of philosophy at Bowdoin College, in *Mind Regained.* His essay is marked by a breadth of vision, clarity of expression, and unembarrassed humility before what we do not, and perhaps cannot, understand. Against postmodernist fashions, Pols, too, is a determined realist. His previous book was *Radical Realism: Direct Knowing in Science and Philosophy.* His realism, however, is not confined by the iron cage of dogmatic reductionism. He urges us to pay close attention to the phenomenon of the mind as we actually experience it in discerning and thinking about reality. The mind *as experienced* should be admitted as evidence in our thinking about the mind. For Searle and many others, the story of philosophy really begins with Descartes and systematic skepticism about the relationship between mind and reality. Everything prior to and counter to the Cartesian starting point is, with varying degrees of insouciance, dismissed as obfuscation—or more simply, as boring.

Pols takes very seriously the moment in human thought that began with Descartes in the seventeenth century and reached its climax in the exchange between Hume and Kant at the end of the eighteenth. But he views it only as that, a moment in the much longer and larger history of human reflection on the nature of the world and our part in it. Pols treats Descartes with great respect, even reverence, and in *Mind Regained* offers a marvelously lucid exposition of the *Meditations,* making the point that moderns who take their Descartes without what he had to say about God and infinity are simply not taking Descartes seriously. Descartes, Pols suggests, would not recognize his thought in what many contemporary textbooks present as the Cartesian turning point.

Pols begins his story at the beginning. "For the West, the conceptual shape of this study of mind was formed by such great philosophical doctrines as those of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Thomas Aquinas. That doctrinal tradition culminates in the medieval notion of the mind of a creative God, a notion whose power in the West is hard to overstate. For a long time the notion was as important in science as in religion and morals; and although its importance for science gradually diminished after the eighteenth century, it remained a vital force for our culture in general all through the nineteenth century." The perception of the human mind as participating in the mind of an "other" is deeply entrenched in our culture, and careful reflection upon that perception leads to a consideration of "causes"—material, efficient, formal, and final—that cannot reduce the mind to something less than we "know" it to be. "From antiquity until the present," Pols writes, "certain highly complex entities have seemed so impressive that their functions do not seem to be adequately accounted for if they are regarded as mere assemblages of more basic entities." That perception undergirds and is essential to the idea of human beings as rational and moral agents.

Playing Billiards with Mozart

I cannot do justice to the elegance of Pols' argument in this space, but he contends that reason compels the conclusion that "*there is an ordering power intrinsic to nature that cannot be adequately explained in scientific terms*" and that "*the ordering power intrinsic to nature works also in human purpose*" (emphasis his). These are, admittedly, bold assertions, but they are derived from close attention to the mind itself. By the mind itself, Pols writes, "I mean the *full concreteness,* the *full actuality,* the *wholeness* of mind, the *lived reality* of mind." He illustrates his point by an imaginative but convincing reconstruction of what was happening when Mozart was playing billiards and taking time out from the game to write down musical passages he was composing in his head, and what is happening in our minds when we read about Mozart doing that. One can abstract what is undeniably a piece of what is happening, such as the central nervous system or neural synapses in the brain, but one has not thereby captured what is happening. "Although the central nervous system is a thing of flesh and blood and so concrete enough, it is then being considered in abstraction from the full concreteness of mind itself." It is simply arbitrary to declare that this piece, separated from all the other pieces of what is happening, is the explanation of the whole.

Much of modern philosophy, says Pols, has made a "negative judgment" about the mind. But there is a curious incoherence in this judgment. "In short," he writes, "the negative philosophical judgment about the powers of the human mind was reached by the study of mind itself—a study conducted of course by mind itself. I call the judgment negative because its most profound claim is that the mind cannot get at

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reality, at what is the case, at what is independent of mind's own capacity to believe or to construct. It needs to be emphasized that the negative judgment still hovers over science itself, even as it did in the days of Hume and Kant. If that judgment is taken seriously, science cannot be exempt from it. An incapacity on the part of the mind to know what is real in independence of the mind's own construction is a general incapacity. It is thus a paradox that the negative judgment has turned attention away from the study of the mind itself to the scientific study of the infrastructure of mind." Pols' contention is that the mind's study of the mind must pay attention to the mind itself. The alternative, although he does not put it quite this way, is that we tell ourselves we are studying the mind while determinedly ignoring, or even denying, the mind that is being studied and, most important, the mind that is doing the studying.

Pols is deeply respectful of science, and of the scientific method as conventionally defined, and he is also keenly aware of its limitations. In one section he spells out the eight steps, or principles, in the received scientific doctrine of causality, concluding with these: " 6. Causality has no telic [purposeful] feature, although human beings tend to attribute teleology (final causality) to nature. 7. Causality has no form-creating feature, other than that expressed in the laws of nature. 8. Agency as such, whether divine or human, forms no part of a scientific causal explanation: although human agency is often appealed to in commonsense causal explanations, agency itself is subject to causal explanation in the sense of the preceding principles. Agency is thus something to be explained, not something that is in itself explanatory." The last point is crucial. What agent is to explain that there is no agency? Which brings us back to some of the best minds of our day telling us they have no mind.

The Knower and the Known

With respect to the "negative judgment of the mind," Pols sums up his case with the observation that it is futile and incoherent to try to achieve an absolute separation of the knower from the known:

> With this phase of our reflective turn we overcome the negative philosophical judgment about the power of our minds which has gradually developed in the course of the epistemological era that is coincidental with modernity—including that last jaded period of modernity which now masquerades as postmodernity. The negative judgment led to the dismal conviction that we can know neither other beings nor ourselves directly and so cannot know any causal significance they may have. It contributed to the gradual discrediting of a complex and nuanced doctrine of causality which, whatever its limitations, left some explanatory room for morality, art, and religion. It left us with a scientific doctrine of causality for which it is impossible to provide a satisfactory philosophical justification. To speak more precisely, it condemned us to oscillate between the conviction that the scientific doctrine is a thoroughly adequate replacement for all the older views of causality and the suspicion that it is a useful pragmatic device whose writ must be carefully circumscribed. It is time to set aside the negative philosophical judgment once and for all.

Between the arguments of Searle and Pols a decision must be made. Pols' is the more aesthetically and intellectually attractive, in that it is marked by modesty, a seriousness that eschews flippancy, a readiness to engage alternative explanations, and a refusal to take refuge in fundamentalist dogma—whether religious or scientific—that is finally a form of fideism. The subtitle of Searle's book is "philosophy in the real world," but it is Pols who attends to the mind as we actually experience it in the real world. He is the uncompromising realist in refusing to accept less than a conclusive argument that that experience is delusory. (And it is impossible to imagine what such an argument might look like.) Most important, Pols can understand and explain the intellectual moves made by Searle, while Searle steadfastly ignores the moves made by Pols.

Thus Pols' argument is able to give an account of Searle's argument, whereas Searle refuses to engage the argument of Pols—and of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and a good many contemporary philosophers. What Mozart thought he was doing as he played billiards and what you think you are doing as you read these words has, for Searle, no explanatory force. Your thinking is the object to be explained, but there appears to be no explaining subject. Put differently, the explaining subject, the rational agent, disappears into the fundament of the (as yet to be scientifically determined) explanation. Those who think that this poses metaphysical puzzles deserving of careful exploration are for John Searle and "the educated members of our civilization at the turn of the millennium" to be dismissed as "bores."

Three final points. I do not know what religious conclusions, if any, Edward Pols draws from his argument. He does not say. His essay is, at most, a

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prolegomenon to theological reflection, just as Searle's is intended to preclude such reflection. Second, it is not adequate to say, as Pols does, that the realism he champions leaves "some explanatory room for morality, art, and religion." This sounds once again like morality, art, and religion that is "of the gaps"—for the time being, until we achieve a fuller explanation. Pols' argument, it seems to me, not only invites but demands the explanatory employment of morality, art, and religion—in short, attentiveness to the mind as experienced in the real world. Morality, art, and religion are not short-term expedients until some better explanation of the real world comes along. They are irreplaceable and irreducible in the real world as experienced, as well as in any world we can imagine, recognizing that our imagining is part of the real world as experienced. I am not sure whether Pols would disagree with that. Third, one should not leave this subject without noting that the caricature of religion and theology offered by thinkers such as John Searle is too often a caricature handed them by religious thinkers who, as we are reminded by the recent encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), do not respect the imperatives of thinking clearly. But that is another big subject, also aptly described as intriguing.

FT

The Magisterial "We"

Bishop Joseph Fiorenza is getting off to a rocky start as president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB). Brows were furrowed by the speech in which he criticized anyone who suggests that some bishops are more fervent in their devotion to the Magisterium than others. It's hard to know what to make of that. Bishops frequently express their views on many subjects, as they surely should, and presumably they speak with the intention of being heard. Are people to pretend that they do not hear what they hear, or to refrain from drawing conclusions from what they hear? Is it disrespect toward the episcopal office to think, for example, that John Cardinal O'Connor might be somewhat more favorably disposed toward the teaching and pastoral initiatives of this pontificate than, say, Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee? I can't imagine that either of them would think so.

Bishop Fiorenza goes on to insist that the bishops must speak with "one voice." On the deposit of the faith, to be sure, but bishops are first of all teachers in the local church that is their diocese, and teachers do not all teach in the same way. Surely he does not suggest that bishops should remain silent and let the NCCB or its president speak for them.

Then there was Bishop Fiorenza's speech at the Los Angeles "Gathering for Jubilee Justice." He strongly and rightly stated, "Racism is a sin—a sin that divides the human family and violates the fundamental dignity of those called to be children of the same Father." But he then went on to say: "We were dismayed when Proposition 209 abolished affirmative action in California a few years ago, and we are alarmed as other states consider similar legislation." Who, as Tonto might put it, is the magisterial "we" here? The bishop continued: "We hear the sound of racism among those who suggest too much is being given to racial minorities by way of affirmative action programs. At times, protestations claiming that all persons should be treated equally reflect the desire to maintain a status quo that favors one race and social group at the expense of the poor and nonwhite." I can imagine that some might hear the sound of spiritual pride and judgmentalism in that characterization of support for Proposition 209.

Among the millions of California voters there are no doubt some racists, but are a majority of Californians, including substantial numbers of blacks and Hispanics who voted for 209, fairly described as racists or as people desiring to maintain their own advantage against the poor and nonwhite? Does the bishop, who insists upon the importance of sensitivity and listening to others, really not know that many people of all races, ethnicities, and classes oppose quota systems because, inter alia, they believe they are demeaning to those whom they aim to help, are in conflict with the constituting principles of the American order, are inevitably incoherent and impossible to administer fairly, are unjust to disadvantaged Americans who do not qualify by virtue of their bloodline or skin color, and are a divisive distraction from policies that might better bring the marginal into the mainstream of opportunity and responsibility?

Certainly he must know that. And certainly he must know that the vicious misrepresentation of the views of others—as is also the case with racism—"divides the human family and violates the fundamental dignity of those called to be children of the same Father." Bishop Fiorenza has been president of the NCCB for only a short time. His election indicates that most of his peers have confidence in him. His is an important voice, among several hundred others. We (that's the editorial "we") share the hope that that confidence will be vindicated as he learns to speak

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more carefully, accurately, and charitably of those with whom he—although not necessarily the "we" of the NCCB—is in disagreement. It is a matter of sensitivity and listening. Or, as used to be understood, a matter of simple honesty.

FT

Evangelicals and Catholics to the South of Us

Latin America was very much on the minds of those who gathered here in New York in 1992 to initiate the project that became known as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." Nowhere in the world is the confrontation between evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics so intense, and typically hostile, as in the countries of Central and South America, including the Caribbean. As discussed in my book *Appointment in Rome*, the ECT vision was vigorously proposed at the 1997 Synod for America convened by Pope John Paul II. Prior to the synod we in ECT had organized meetings with Latin American bishops both here and in Bogota, Colombia, which is the headquarters of the council of Latin American bishops conferences (CELAM). Every step of the way we had the strong encouragement and personal participation of Edward Cardinal Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity. To the great gratification of all concerned, the Pope's apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in America*, which was issued last January and sums up the work of the synod, strongly endorsed the vision of Evangelicals and Catholics working together for the evangelization and reevangelization of Latin America.

The past year has witnessed unprecedented progress in advancing that vision. CELAM has established a working relationship with the various Protestant associations in Latin America, and they have together projected an ambitious program to advance reconciliation among Christians. One early result of this effort is "A Message to the Churches," issued on May 14, 1999, from a meeting in Quito, Ecuador, of thirty Catholic and Pentecostal leaders (evangelicalism in Latin America tends to be strongly Pentecostal), plus ten representatives from what are called the "historic churches" (e.g., Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian). Herewith a few excerpts from the statement signed by participants from sixteen Latin American countries:

> Here in the heart of the City of Quito, built upon a mountain (Matthew 45:14), we have lived, as on a new Tabor, the experience of the meeting with the transfigured Lord. His presence in our midst (Matthew 18:20) has caused the curtains (Matthew 27:51) and the walls of separation to fall, which for many years prevented us from recognizing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.
>
> Gathered together in one house, we have met face to face and we have placed in each and every heart and mind our story, our personal encounter with the Risen Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit who calls us day after day to a more evangelical and committed life. With great surprise, we have discovered the beauty of our distinct ecclesial traditions which have the same root in the one Lord (Ephesians 4:4-6), present and living, yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).
>
> In a genuine climate of love and brotherhood, marked by frequent and intense moments of prayer, as was found in the first community in Jerusalem, our sorrows which are the result of a long history of prejudices, misunderstandings, mutual rejections, including experiences of aggression or mutual exclusion, have been brought to light. We have agreed furthermore that there are doctrinal differences which are not easy to overcome, but we are deeply convinced that we have to continue walking in search of unity in diversity.
>
> We promise to search together for new and lasting roads of convergence, with the conviction that we have been called by Jesus Christ to interpret the Latin American *kairos*, and with the power of the Spirit to share in mission and to be faithful to the prayer of Jesus that "all may be one so that the world might believe."

That language will sound conventional to many readers, but in the context of Latin America it is without precedent and utterly startling. The Quito declaration will almost certainly stir controversy, as ECT has also been controversial, notably among Evangelicals, in this country. There much more than here, evangelization has in the past meant evangelization against rather than with the other side

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of the Catholic/Protestant divide. Moreover, Quito is not a one-shot event. As is the case with ECT here, CELAM and the various Protestant groups involved have committed themselves to a long-term program that will address not only practical cooperation but also the outstanding doctrinal differences, underscoring that the unity we seek is not unity at the price of truth but unity in the truth. In terms of the Christian mission, there are few more heartening developments at the beginning of a new millennium.

FT

CHESTERTON AND THE THERENESS OF IT

I try not to read too much Chesterton, or at least not too much at one sitting. He has a way of insinuating himself into a writer's manner, leading either to pretension or despair. To try to write like him makes one look silly, and knowing that you can't write like him is very depressing. These thoughts are brought to mind by Joseph Pearce's great big new biography, *Wisdom and Innocence: A Life of G. K. Chesterton* (Ignatius). Mr. Pearce is clearly in love with his subject, so there is nothing here aimed at deflating Chesterton's reputation, which will no doubt disappoint *bien pensant* readers for whom a worthy biography must expose the unworthiness of the life examined. Biography as pathography is all the rage. The same critics might also complain that there is an inordinate amount of direct quotation of Chesterton, but I am inclined to the view that it is perfectly in order when it is Chesterton who is quoted—especially when much of the material is culled from private letters and other sources previously unpublished.

Pearce's Chesterton is very much the *Catholic* Chesterton. And, as the title indicates, so is another recent biographical study by David W. Fagerberg, *The Size of Chesterton's Catholicism.* Chesterton and C. S. Lewis are frequently compared as Christian apologists, and one meets people beyond numbering who were decisively influenced by these writers in their course of conversion. In the case of Chesterton, however, the conversion is, more often than not it seems, not just to Christianity but to the Catholic Church. The phrase "just to Christianity," of course, puts one in mind of Lewis' *Mere Christianity.* Alan Jacobs of Wheaton College has suggested ("The Second Coming of C. S. Lewis," FT, November 1994) that there was a certain guile in the "mereness" of Lewis' Christianity. Lewis combined the intellectual panache of Oxford and Cambridge with a one-size-fits-all Christianity that required no uncomfortably specific decisions about church, sacraments, and the sometimes embarrassing baggage of the Christian community through time, also known as tradition. I think there is considerable merit in Jacobs' argument, and it has a great deal to do with why Lewis, unlike Chesterton, is so very popular with Protestants, and especially evangelical Protestants.

Chesterton exulted in the specific, the particular, the thus and soness and thereness of things. What others viewed as embarrassments of the Catholic tradition he embraced as an opportunity to demonstrate that something manifestly wrong was, upon closer examination, but the shadow side of something greatly right. From childhood on, it seems that Chesterton had a keen appreciation that almost everything could be perceived as being otherwise. That is to say, the way we perceive reality is not abstractly universal but dramatically contingent. The key thing is to see what is there. This understanding is at the heart of his *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox,* a book that the distinguished Thomist, Etienne Gilson, called one of the greatest ever written on the Angelic Doctor. (I had long been familiar with Gilson's praise of the book but thought it was in the nature of a courteous aside or maybe a book blurb. Pearce provides the full text of what Gilson said, and his praise of Chesterton's treatment of Thomas obviously reflects his very considered judgment.)

To say that Chesterton's reality was dramatically contingent is in no way to suggest that he would have any sympathy for the fashions of postmodernity in which reality is "socially constructed." Quite the opposite is the case. For Chesterton, the "truth" was never in quotation marks. It was more like Dr. Johnson's kicking the stone in response to Bishop Berkeley's philosophical construction of reality. Although in Chesterton's case it was a matter of being kicked by the stone, by the very thereness of things. From early on, he was aware of the seductive possibilities of being deceived by worlds of our own imaginative creation. Although it is not the point that Pearce is making, this is evident in a passage on Chesterton and homosexuality.

As a schoolboy, Chesterton encountered the usual homoerotic undercurrents, and was fascinated for a time by a fellow who played at being a diabolist. GKC later wrote, "I have since heard that he died; it may be said, I think, that he committed suicide; though he did it with tools of pleasure, not with tools of pain. God help him, I know the road he went; but I have never known or even dared to think what was that place at which he stopped and [so I] refrained." We

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can play at being devils or the Devil's playmates. It can even be exciting. But it is false and therefore it is deadly. Long before John Paul II and Vaclav Havel popularized the phrase, Chesterton's was a passion to "live in the truth." The phrase is but a riff on the words of Jesus, "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free." The alternative to being free is to be dead. Chesterton was exuberantly free. And, he would quickly add, he was free because he was bound to be free, being bound by the truth.

The Master of Paradox

To speak of being bound to be free is to indulge a trope that, let it be admitted, Chesterton sometimes overindulged, his beloved paradox. It is no disrespect to note that frequently the Chestertonian paradox does not bear close logical examination, being more verbal sleight of hand than substance. On the other hand, a man standing on his head and waving his legs, which is Chesterton's image for a paradox, doesn't bear close logical examination either. The spectacle, if it means anything at all, is to point to something in the vicinity of the spectacle. But the paradoxical phrase "bound to be free" does stand up to the most rigorous examination, if it is understood that the binding is to the truth. For Chesterton, Christianity, by which he means Catholic Christianity, frees because it is, quite simply, the truth about everything.

Paradox, Chesterton insisted, does not obfuscate but illuminates. When praised for his mastery of the paradoxical trope, Chesterton responded that God, not he, is the master of paradox. His friend Maisie Ward explained it this way: "What it amounted to was roughly this: paradox must be of the nature of things because of God's infinity and the limitations of the world and of man's mind. To us limited human beings God can express His idea only in fragments. We can bring together apparent contradictions in those fragments whereby a greater truth is suggested. If we do this in a sudden or incongruous manner we startle the unprepared and arouse the cry of paradox. But if we will not do it we shall miss a great deal of truth." Chesterton's discovery was that Catholicism is large enough and various enough to accommodate all the paradoxical combinations by which the fullness of truth is revealed. The Church is, he said in a typically fetching formulation, "the trysting place of all the truths in the world."

A trysting place is where lovers meet, and Chesterton's was a lifelong affair with the truth that has entered into liaison with all the truths in the world. But to pull this off you have to actually live in the trysting place, which means to live in the truth, which means to live in Christ, which means to live in the Church that is the presence of Christ through time. The Church, he asserted, is ever so much larger from the inside than from the outside. To the modern mind and its notion of freedom, becoming a Catholic was to enter into an obedience that narrowed one's horizons. Chesterton contended that precisely the opposite is the case. Obedience (from the Latin *obedire*) means responsive listening, and the invitation of the Church is an invitation to the high road of freedom. How could there be anything confining about listening and responding to an invitation to dance with all the truths in the world? Obedience, for Chesterton, is not a matter of closing down one's critical faculties but of putting them in proper order. Doctrine and dogma provide a framework for intellectual inquiry that is otherwise random, impulsive, and idiosyncratic. "To become a Catholic," he wrote, "is not to leave off thinking but to learn how to think."

David Fagerberg treats insightfully the ways in which those who resist entering into the trysting place of Christ and his Church often seem to be fearful of a closed and confining space. One might say they are claustrophobic. Fagerberg agrees with Chesterton, however, in suggesting that the more common phenomenon is that people resist because they are agoraphobic. They are afraid of the wide-open public spaces that freedom calls home. The Catholic Church does not so much provide a refuge and resting place as it launches one into all the worlds—spiritual, mystical, intellectual, historical—that are engaged by all the truths in the world. Faith as adventure is at the heart of Chesterton's exuberance. Chesterton surely understood that there is a wideness in God's mercy, but his characteristic accent was on the wildness in God's mercy. If you are living in the truth, you can with defiant, almost swashbuckling, confidence take on all comers. James Joyce, not the most orthodox of Catholics, said the Catholic Church is Here Comes Everybody. I don't know if Chesterton ever commented on that way of putting it, but my hunch is that he would have rather liked it. A church that is not marked by paradox, that trims history and the excesses of life and thought to fit its preferences—in short, a church that is not wild—could not be the trysting place of all the truths in the world.

The Chief Idea

Even as a boy, Chesterton says, he had this intuition that any theory or attitude that deadened the experienced wildness of things must, to that extent, be false. "I had a strong inward impulse to revolt. . . . But as I was still thinking the thing out by myself, with

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little help from philosophy and no real help from religion, I invented a rudimentary and makeshift mystical theory of my own. It was substantially this: that even mere existence, reduced to its most primary limits, was extraordinary enough to be exciting. Anything was magnificent as compared with nothing. Even if the very daylight were a dream, it was a day-dream; it was not a nightmare."

That was Chesterton the schoolboy. As an old man, shortly before he died in 1936, he wrote about what "I hope is not pompous to call the chief idea of my life. I will not say the doctrine I have always taught, but the doctrine I should always have liked to teach. That is the idea of taking things with gratitude, and not taking things for granted." Perhaps it is more a sensibility than a doctrine, but anyone who has read much Chesterton knows he taught it, and continues to teach it, with powerful effect. A life lived well is a life lived in response to grace, and from gratitude flows the wildness of wonder enough for an eternity.

He was impatient with the prissy, the proper, the excessively neat. Which no doubt explains in part his affinity for Hilaire Belloc. Pearce tells the delightful story of novelist Henry James paying a visit to GKC, which is interrupted by the arrival of Hilaire Belloc, just back from tramping through Europe and in a typically raucous mood: "Henry James had a name for being subtle; but I think that situation was too subtle for him. I doubt to this day whether he, of all men, did not miss the irony of the best comedy in which he ever played a part. He left America because he loved Europe, and all that was meant by England or France; the gentry, the gallantry, the tradition of lineage and locality, the life that had been lived beneath old portraits in oak-paneled rooms. And there, on the other side of the tea-table, was Europe, was the old thing that made France and England, the posterity of the English squires and the French soldiers; ragged, unshaven, shouting for beer, shameless above all shades of poverty and wealth; sprawling, indifferent, secure. And what looked across at it was still the Puritan refinement of Boston; and the space it looked across was wider than the Atlantic."

Chesterton and George Bernard Shaw were regular and friendly sparring partners in diverse forums, and one encounter produced this from Chesterton: "Shaw's misunderstanding of Shakespeare arose largely from the fact that he is a Puritan, while Shakespeare was spiritually a Catholic. The former is always screwing himself up to see the truth; the latter is often content that truth is there." Chesterton was much impressed by the thereness of things, and it had everything to do with his becoming a Catholic. Before his conversion, he wrote to an Anglican friend: "As you may possibly guess, I want to consider my position about the biggest thing of all, whether I am to be inside it or outside it. I used to think one could be an Anglo-Catholic and really inside it; but if that was (to use an excellent phrase of your own) only a Porch, I do not think I want a Porch, and certainly not a Porch standing some way from the building. A Porch looks so silly, standing all by itself in a field."

Later, he would write his mother to explain his conversion: "I have thought about you, and all that I owe to you and my father, not only in the way of affection, but of the ideals of honor and freedom and charity and all other good things you always taught me: and I am not conscious of the smallest break or difference in those ideals; but only of a new and necessary way of fighting for them. I think . . . that the fight for the family and the free citizen and everything decent must now be waged by the one fighting form of Christianity." Immediately after Chesterton's reception into the Church, Belloc wrote him about his own reasons for being Catholic. The words of Belloc are, in tone and substance, surely Chestertonian: "And as to the doubt of the soul, I discover it to be false: a mood, not a conclusion. My conclusion—and that of all men who have ever once *seen* it—is the faith. Corporate, organized, a personality, teaching. A thing, not a theory. It."

A Good Argument

Today such sentiments might grate against ecumenical sensibilities. As a faithful son of the Church, Chesterton, and I suppose Belloc, would have gone along with the development of doctrine at the Second Vatican Council which recognizes that, while the Catholic Church is the Church of Jesus Christ most fully and rightly ordered through time, there are many beyond its boundaries who are, whether they know it or not, "truly but imperfectly in communion" with the Catholic Church. At the same time, I expect he would be impatient with styles of ecumenism that are reduced to niceness and take the edge off "the one fighting form of Christianity." Not that Chesterton was a quarrelsome person. On the contrary, all testify to his civility and affability in the many disputes he relished. The trouble with a quarrel, he said, is that it interrupts a good argument.

A good argument must be about truth, and ecumenism that is more about negotiating differences than about discovering the truth is not very interesting. I have no doubt that Chesterton would agree with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who writes that our disputing ancestors "were in reality much closer to each other when in all their disputes they still knew that they could only be servants of one truth which must be acknowledged as being as great

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and as pure as it has been intended for us by God." Also, the alternatives to Catholicism that Chesterton knew were the Church of England and the Methodist chapel, anodyne forms of the faith unsuited to his spirited mind and soul. Were he an American, he might have found his fighting form of the faith in, say, the Southern Baptist Convention or Missouri Synod Lutheranism. But there the fights are about such a small and selective part of all the truths in the world. So still today it would likely be the case that Chesterton could settle for nothing less than the capacious trysting place and company of combat that is the Catholic Church.

While he said that tradition is the democracy of the dead, he did not have any use for democratic governance in the Church. The Church is about truth, and truth is necessarily hierarchical. It is a very different matter in the civil realm. There Chesterton was a great democrat, but he didn't think much of the way democracy worked in aristocracy-ridden England. The problem, he said, is that, while the people get to vote, they don't get to pose the questions to be voted on. If things continue as they are, "There will be less democratic value in an English election than in a Roman saturnalia of slaves. For the powerful class will choose two courses of action, both of them safe for itself, and then give the democracy the gratification of taking one course or the other. The lord will take two things so much alike that he would not mind choosing them blindfold—and then for a great jest he will allow the slaves to choose."

As the chief voice of the Distributist League, GKC advocated, with wavering energies throughout his life, an alternative to both capitalism and socialism. He understood himself to be in line with Catholic social teaching, specifically the teaching of Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*, and tried to be definite about the kind of capitalism that must be opposed. "When I say 'Capitalism,' I commonly mean something that may be stated thus: 'That economic condition in which there is a class of capitalists, roughly recognizable and relatively small, in whose possession so much of the capital is concentrated as to necessitate a very large majority of the citizens serving those capitalists for a wage.'" He recognized that "capitalism" can mean many different things. "Lenin and Trotsky believe as much as Lloyd George and Thomas Aquinas that the economic operations of today must leave something over for the economic operations of tomorrow. And that is all that capital means in its economic sense. In that case, the word is useless. My use of it may be arbitrary, but it is not useless."

The ideas of economic distributism were never thoroughly developed, and perhaps could not be. But he relentlessly insisted that there had to be a better way in which ordinary people could take charge of their life and property, or, in the language of contemporary Catholic social teaching, be "the artisans of their own destiny." The impulse of distributism, one might suggest, is to work out more fully the economic implications of the doctrine of subsidiarity—or as the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus* puts it, "the subjectivity of society." Today's admirers of Chesterton who are also proponents of democratic capitalism tend to forgive him his economic views. In fact, those views may not be so distant as many think from what is rightly affirmed in today's capitalism, which is notably distant from what Chesterton meant by the term.

No League of Tribes

Another and more serious obstacle to the appreciation of Chesterton is his alleged anti-Semitism. Joseph Pearce's forthright treatment of that charge should put it to rest once and for all. Chesterton shared conventional English prejudices about Jewish influence, prejudices which today would be called anti-Semitic. This was exacerbated early on in life when a Jewish financier brought a lawsuit that entangled his family and friends in considerable unpleasantness. But, as a prominent rabbi wrote upon Chesterton's death, "When Hitlerism came, he was one of the first to speak out with all the directness and frankness of a great and unabashed spirit. Blessing to his memory!"

Long before anyone could know the unspeakable horror to which it would lead, GKC was appalled by the barbarism of the Nazis, and particularly by their anti-Semitism. In 1933 he wrote that a measure of nationalism, understood as patriotism, can be a good thing. "But the racial spirit is a restless spirit; it does not go by frontiers but by the wandering of the blood. . . . You can have a League of Nations; but you could hardly have a League of Tribes. When the Tribe is on the march, it is apt to forget leagues—not to mention frontiers." He was among the first to perceive the connections between racial theory, eugenics, anti-Semitism, and the tribal impulse toward *Lebensraum*. He did not live to see his perception confirmed by World War II and the Holocaust.

Today it is often forgotten how very respectable were eugenics and related racial theories at the beginning of the century. In 1913, Chesterton vigorously attacked the Mental Deficiency Act, which had the strong support of the Church of England. The public committee advocating its passage was headed by the archbishops of Canterbury and York. Bishop Barnes of Birmingham was a spokesman on behalf of the Christian case for eugenics, and he

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proposed: "Christianity seeks to create the Kingdom of God, the community of the elect. It tries to make what we may call a spiritually eugenic society. . . . When religious people realize that, in preventing the survival of the socially unfit, they are working in accordance with the plan by which God has brought humanity so far on its road, their objections to repressive action will vanish." Chesterton recoiled with all his being from the notion of a eugenic society, spiritual or otherwise.

On these questions, too, his Catholic spirit was brought to bear. He reveled in the messiness of Catholicism. A significant difference between the Protestant and Catholic ways of being Christian, he suggested, is indicated by the fact that "the Protestant generally says, 'I am a good Protestant,' while the Catholic always says, 'I am a bad Catholic.'" Near the end of his life, he responded to a letter writer who brought a long list of charges against the Catholic Church, including its tolerance of a vast horde of criminals, prostitutes, and other disreputable types who hang on to its fringes. True enough, says Chesterton, and an interesting fact it is. "They cannot get the Church's Sacraments or solid assurances, except by changing their whole way of life; but they do actually love the Faith that they cannot live by. . . . If you explain it by supposing that the Church, though bound to refuse them Absolution where there is not amendment, keeps in touch with them and treats their human dignity rather more sympathetically than does the world, Puritan or Pagan . . . that also probably refers to a real fact. It is one of the facts that convince me most strongly that Catholicism is what it claims to be. After two thousand years of compromises and concordats, with every sort of social system, the Catholic Church has never yet become quite respectable. He still eats and drinks with publicans and sinners."

David Fagerberg and I were both Lutherans who later entered into full communion with the Catholic Church. Unlike Fagerberg, I was not conscious of Chesterton being a major influence in that decision, but perhaps he was by my side on the journey more than I realized. Certainly I look forward to good conversation with him in that inn at the end of the road, over a steak, a pint of ale, and a fine cigar. But, for the purposes of this preliminary reflection, let me leave it to Mr. Fagerberg: "Chesterton said saints are medicines because they are antidotes, claiming the saint restores the world to sanity by exaggerating what the world neglects. Chesterton was this author's antidote: the one who exaggerated things which had been neglected. . . . He can feel like a walking overstatement to someone who does not need the elixir, but to someone who does, he is an exact dosage. I have not written this for the purpose that it necessarily have the same effect on anyone else, only to repay my own debt by honoring a friend." Chesterton is a very good friend to have in the communion of sinners made saints.

FT

Proposing Democracy Anew—Part Two

Last month I discussed what I called the first proposition in rethinking and renewing democracy for the century ahead: *The sovereignty of the democratic state is answerable to a higher sovereignty.* A second proposition is this: *In a democratic society, we live under several, and sometimes conflicting, sovereignties.*

In a democratic society there is an ongoing debate over the *truths* about the human person and human community on which democracy rests. These include the "self-evident truths" alluded to in the Declaration of Independence, truths about persons created equal and endowed by God with certain inalienable rights. The rich Christologically-based anthropology contained in, for instance, the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus* can make an invaluable contribution in fleshing out and giving a more secure foundation to the constituting truths of the democratic order. That anthropology is not just for the "domestic consumption" of Christians. As with all Christian truth, it is genuinely public in character, and we must work at communicating it in ways not confined to the sphere marked "religion." In the century ahead, that is an imperative task for those who have confidently internalized the teaching of the Church.

Abraham Kuyper, an early-twentieth-century Dutch Calvinist theologian and politician, wrote insightfully about "spheres of sovereignty." Closely connected to certain understandings of natural law, the concept of spheres of sovereignty derives from an awareness that there is inherent in the nature of human beings and societies certain functions that have their own integrity, and that integrity—or sovereignty—must be respected. Thus, for example, family, economic life, politics, and of course the life of faith have their own "spheres," and the course of justice is to coordinate these spheres in the service of the common good. As a good Calvinist, Kuyper insisted that what is true of nature is reinforced also by the mandates of revelation. Also as a good Calvinist, he had a keen

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appreciation of the catastrophe of the world's fall into sin, and the consequences of that for what we call nature. One consequence is that spheres intended to be coordinated are all too often in conflict with one another. Although it seems that John Paul II never read Abraham Kuyper, there is a striking similarity—allowing for Calvinist and Catholic differences on the consequences of sin—between Kuyper's "spheres of sovereignty" and the argument that *Centesimus Annus* makes about "the subjectivity of society." I will come back to that.

A third proposition: *The problems of democracy are inherent in democracy.* In the "new democracies" of post-Communist Europe, many express discouragement and disillusionment that, after a decade and more, they are still wrestling with the problems of democracy. In America, we are wrestling with those problems after more than two centuries of our constitutional order. The difficult relationship between moral truth and democratic politics is built into democracy. The difficulties are not necessarily the result of ill-will on the part of any parties or institutions. The modern democratic state, like all modern states, has an insatiable appetite to encompass the whole of social reality, including religion. What we might call the totalitarian impulse did not die with Nazism or communism. The state, often driven by good intentions, is always tempted to turn itself, in effect, into a church, with the result that it views the claims of religion as an intolerable limit upon its effectiveness. This may be particularly the case in America.

Many observers have noted that America is a profoundly "moralistic" nation. As we have frequently had occasion to note, the incidence of religious belief and action in the United States is much higher than in other developed democratic societies. There is always the danger that this moralistic and religious dynamic can be captured by a "civil religion" that is in service to the state. Against that danger, religious communities must cultivate their own life in a way that is relentlessly independent of both a generalized "civil religion" and the ambitions of the state.

Making Do Short of the Kingdom

A fourth proposition is this: *Democracy is and always will be unsatisfactory.* Winston Churchill is often quoted as saying that "democracy is the worst system of government known to man, except for all the others that have been tried." That is not everything that can be said for democracy, but it is a not unimportant thing to be said. For the Christian, and indeed for every human being who aspires to live in the truth, the only satisfactory order is the Kingdom of God promised in the eschatological consummation of history. All our politics, including democratic politics, is, at most, penultimate. The state functions in the sphere of the penultimate. The church points to and anticipates the ultimate, the Kingdom of God. Christians live in both spheres and therefore are, in the words of the second century *Letter to Diognetus*, "resident aliens" in any earthly city.

Although all are unsatisfactory, all orderings of the earthly city are not equal. Democracy is a relative good, but it is superior to other orders because: 1) it is the form of government that, under the conditions of modernity, best accommodates the Christian understanding of human dignity; 2) it best fosters and protects the exercise of basic human rights; 3) it provides an enlarged sphere for the exercise of personal responsibility and the pursuit of the common good; 4) in its economic dimension, it best accords with human creativity and approximate justice; and, most important, 5) it is institutionally open to the future, including the ultimate future that is the Kingdom of God. On the last point, there is a great advantage in a political system that is transparently conducted by, and held accountable to, distinctly ungodlike human beings who freely avail themselves of their freedom to air their discontents with the system. This is a valuable prophylactic against the temptation to deify democracy or mistake it for the Kingdom of God.

The fifth proposition: *Democracy is more than democratic institutions.* Institutions—such as elections, representative legislatures, a disinterested judiciary, and a free press—are necessary but not sufficient conditions of democracy. Recall again Aristotle's understanding of politics as free persons deliberating the question, How ought we to order our life together? For Aristotle, politics and ethics are not separate subjects. The word "ought" in the definition indicates that politics is necessarily a moral enterprise. Morality is not an intrusion upon democratic politics, it is the very heart of democratic politics. The controlling terms of politics—e.g., justice, equal respect, fairness, the common good—are all moral terms.

For the people to freely deliberate the ordering of their lives together, there must be different communities of deliberation, some determinedly independent from the political order itself. Chief among the latter is the church. This is why Alexis de Tocqueville said that, in American democracy, religion is "the first political institution." It is in the communities of religion that people learn the habits and arts of life together. Even those who do not go to church draw their moral categories and sensibilities, whether they know it or not, from religion. It is the

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church that bears, transmits, and publicly disseminates what might be called "the commanding moral truths" by which public deliberation is conducted. As *Centesimus Annus* insists, this does not mean that the Christian message is an ideology, nor that the church becomes one political player among others. The church's part is to provide the independent space that is the moral ambiance within which the commanding truths are nurtured and transmitted, and from which its members can give those truths effective public expression. Sometimes this requires the uncompromising assertion of moral truths which the state violates at the peril of calling into question its own legitimacy. (On the last score, questions such as abortion and euthanasia are urgently pertinent.)

Majorities, Minorities, and What Makes Real Law

The sixth proposition: *Democracy is more than majority rule.* Of course democracy is majority rule, through representative means and within constitutional limits. In the United States it is commonly said that the purpose of the Constitution is to prevent the majority from violating the rights of the minority, and there is truth in that. The prior truth is that the Constitution is to facilitate the rule of the majority, which is an indispensable part of democracy. These two truths are not in conflict. The rights protected by, for instance, the first ten amendments to the Constitution which we call the Bill of Rights belong to both the majority and the minority. If the majority does not support such rights, they become, in the fine phrase of James Madison, no more than "parchment barriers" against tyranny. In American political discourse, we have fallen into the sloppy habit of pitting the Constitution against the will of a majority of the people. It is also a dangerous habit, since it undermines the support of the majority for the constitutional order. Majority rule does not mean that everything is up for a vote. Things that are not up for a vote include freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of association, and other basic civil rights that make democratic politics possible and morally worthy. On the other hand, it is possible that a people could democratically vote to repeal the protection of basic rights. At that point a democracy would cease to be a democracy.

The possibility of democracy's democratic self-destruction reminds us again that democracy requires more than the institutions of democracy. One might argue that Weimar Germany possessed elegantly constructed democratic institutions. What it lacked was a public moral culture that held politics accountable to the higher standards, and ultimately to the higher sovereignty, without which freedom cannot be sustained. I would suggest this as a maxim: Politics is in largest part the function of culture, and at the heart of culture is morality, and at the heart of morality is religion. When this maxim is forgotten, democracy understood as majority rule results in the death of democracy.

The seventh proposition: *Democracy presupposes that the legitimacy of positive law depends upon its compatibility with moral law.* This is an argument set forth with great persuasive force in the 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life). In contemporary democracies, very much including the U.S., it is commonly said that "morality cannot be legislated." In fact, the opposite is the case. Morality is the only thing that can be legislated. All political questions of importance are moral questions. We prohibit murder, theft, defamation of character, and false advertising; we regulate employment practices and other matters in the interest of the common good. Whatever vocabulary is used in explaining such measures, we undertake them because they are deemed to be right and in order to prevent what we deem to be wrong. "Right" and "wrong" are inescapably moral categories. The question is not *whether* but *how* we legislate morality. In this representative democracy, we legislate morality democratically. At least that is the way it is supposed to work.

(Next month the third and final part of "Democracy Proposed Anew" takes up what is meant by "the limited state," why Christians should not want a "confessional state," and the ways in which "tolerance" is and is not a virtue.)

FT

While We're At It

■"Forty-five minutes is really not much time to explore the religious convictions of a man who wants to be the leader of the world's most powerful nation—and who is also as publicly reserved as Vice President Al Gore. But the seven religion reporters who met with Mr. Gore yesterday at the White House did their best." So writes Peter Steinfels of the *New York Times*, who was impressed that in the course of the exchange Gore mentioned thinkers such as Reinhold Niebuhr, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. "To hear the name 'Merleau-Ponty' trip off the tongue of a major American

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politician is surely extraordinary," observes Steinfels. "Whether it is a qualification to be President is an entirely different matter." Gore told the reporters that leaders have been trapped in a "dead-end debate" on church-state questions, faced with the false choice between "hollow secularism or right-wing religion." Steinfels asks, "Is it worth noting what has been frequently noted before—that the private Mr. Gore, unlike the public image, was animated, intellectually serious but not solemn, and more than occasionally spontaneous?" Why not? His boosters apparently believe it cannot be said too often. Steinfels does not say whether the reporters explored why Southern Baptist Gore, like the Southern Baptist he hopes to succeed, is totally at odds with his church on, for instance, protecting the unborn and school choice. Nor is there reference to the theo-philosophical flights of ecological fancy in Gore's book, *Earth in the Balance*. But Mr. Steinfels may be right in saying that the reporters did their best.

■Cynthia Weber, professor of political science at Purdue, is at the forefront of "queer theory," which presents itself as among the hottest of hot new academic disciplines. Her latest book is called *Faking It: U.S. Hegemony in a "Post-Phallic" Era* (University of Minnesota Press). She writes: "This is the United States as I see it today—a white headless body of indecipherable sex and gender cloaked in the flag and daggered with a queer dildo harnessed to its midsection." Given the fix she thinks the country's in, faking it is no little achievement.

■Steven D. Smith's pungent and persuasive book on the Religion Clause of the First Amendment is now out in paperback. *Foreordained Failure: The Quest for a Constitutional Principle of Religious Freedom* (Oxford University Press) makes the argument that the quest for a "principle" of religious freedom or religious nonestablishment was the farthest thing from the minds of the Framers. The purpose of the Religion Clause, says Smith, was entirely jurisdictional, to assure the states that the national government would not interfere with whatever they did or didn't do with respect to religion. That, I believe, overstates (or understates) the matter. The writings of the Framers make clear that at least some of them definitely had principles in mind. In addition, Smith, professor of law at Notre Dame and contributor to these pages, contends that religious freedom today would likely flourish more fully if the courts stepped back from the subject and let the political process work as the Constitution intended. Here too, the judicial usurpation of politics has wreaked havoc over the last forty years, as judges have repeatedly and arrogantly assumed that the people and their elected representatives are incapable of self-government. The arrogance is not in believing that the political process will sometimes make a mess of things, which it certainly does, but in the assumption of judges that they have the right and the competence to replace that process. The Constitution leaves no doubt that they do not have the right, and forty years of conflicted and contradictory church-state jurisprudence demonstrates that they do not have the competence. *Foreordained Failure* is required reading for those who would understand the legal and political questions swirling about religious freedom in America.

■Writing books and reviews about humor is often a humorless business. That is not true of Peter Berger's *Redeeming Laughter* which was discussed in this space (December 1997), but there does seem to be a humorless snag in the review of the book by Wesley Kort of Duke University in *Theology Today*. Or maybe I just don't get it. Kort complains, "Berger is deliberate in his use of 'man' to indicate human beings. Such a usage implies one of two things: either the user asks to be included among those who for so long used that term as inclusive of both genders, or the user is excluding women. I chose to read 'man' in the second way, as not including women." Maybe the humorous jujitsu is that Berger is being inclusive by using exclusive language, meaning that he wants to be included among those who use "man" in an inclusive way. In addition, Kort's choosing is put in the past tense, indicating perhaps that this is his long-standing position, or simply that he read Berger's intention to be the exclusion of women, which is an ungenerous reading of Berger. Or maybe there is a joke hiding in Mr. Kort's curious locution. I'm thinking about it.

■The formidable Thomas Sowell has now completed his "international history" with the publication of *Conquests and Cultures* (Basic, 493 pp., $35), the first two volumes being *Race and Culture* (1994) and *Migrations and Cultures* (1996). It is an astonishing achievement. Some are amazed at how much Sowell is able to write; I am amazed at how much he is able to read. The copious footnotes in this volume, as in the earlier volumes, provide a bibliography of almost everything that has been written about the human condition, or so it seems. "Clear your mind of cant," enjoined the great Dr. Johnson, and Sowell helps the reader do just that. Which means that in our cant-sated culture Thomas Sowell has no choice but to be something of a contrarian. Every self-serving slogan and amiable cliché is challenged by his clear-headed

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and unsentimental attentiveness to what actually happened in history: who did what to whom and why, and with what consequences. Sowell's reach encompasses all continents and cultures, and, far from shying away from the hot questions, he positively relishes taking on the controversial matters of race, ethnicity, colonialism, and the dynamics that give some peoples an advantage over others. Those who are devoted to multiculturalism, rightly understood, should be champions of Thomas Sowell. Regrettably, what usually passes for multiculturalism today is anything but. While the idea of culture is key to Sowell's ambitious enterprise, the idea itself is not clearly defined. I suspect the reason for that is related to his weak treatment of religion, the chief and defining component of culture (as in "cultus"). Sowell is respectful of religion, and one gets the impression that he knows it is more important than he makes explicit. The references to religion are sporadic and in passing, almost suggesting at times that it is epiphenomenal among the forces that shape history. As a result, *Conquests and Cultures*, like the earlier volumes, seldom "gets into the mind" of the peoples discussed; we are given little help in seeing how they understood themselves and others, their obligations, aspirations, and hopes beyond mortality. Sowell sticks to what can be known most clearly from written texts and other evidences, preferably of the kind that can be counted. His disinclination to speculate is both strength and weakness in this project. Center stage are the economic, technological, and, to a lesser extent, political indicators of rise and fall, progress and regress. So this trilogy is not the final word on how the world got to be in the shape it is. Such a final word is an eschatological concept. Meanwhile, Sowell has provided a marvelously bracing, informative, and lucid account of world history, for which we should be grateful. (Interested readers might well begin with the third volume, which includes a helpful summary of, and invitation to, the earlier volumes.)

■A while back, a study by the Institute for American Values on the presentation of marriage and sexuality in high school textbooks was mentioned in this space. One of the principal findings of the study was a dull fixation on health rather than moral content. Perhaps not remarkably, a study by the American Textbook Council on the presentation of religion in high school textbooks has found the exact same problem. The study, called *Learning About Religion, Learning From Religion*, comments that the texts "reflect a modern, hygienic view of spiritual welfare, an ontological outlook vested in support groups and stress reduction, whereby religion is reduced to a 'support group,' perhaps one of use for young people who are trying to 'cope with the stressors in their lives.' Such advice is more than vulgar: it is diminishing to the human spirit and morally corrosive in its vision." The study offers suggestions for the improvement of the curriculum, including specific lists of books to read and themes to study. To obtain a copy of the study, write to the American Textbook Council, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 448, New York, New York 10115 ($10 each).

■"Should Clergy Hold the Priest-Penitent Privilege?" is a very persuasive article in the *Marquette Law Review* by Michael J. Mazza. He takes off from the 1996 case in which Father Timothy Mockaitis of Portland, Oregon, discovered that his hearing the confession of suspected murderer Conan Hale had been secretly taped by prison authorities. The Archdiocese of Portland, joined by other religious groups, petitioned to have the tape destroyed and to get a guarantee that sacramental confessions would not be recorded in the future. Turned down by a state court, they were vindicated by a federal court of appeals. Mazza argues that the court of appeals was on target with its church-state jurisprudence and concludes with this: "The contrary argument is, no doubt, often motivated by a desire to garner as much evidence as possible in order to help solve heinous crimes like the ones in *Mockaitis v. Harcleroad.* Nevertheless, the sanctity of the confessional or other place of religious counsel is worthy of constitutional protection. This is true not only because spiritual communications have therapeutic value, or even because wise counsel offered by caring ministers often can lead to criminals turning themselves in, but because the opportunity for confidential and cathartic confession may represent one of the last strongholds of privacy against the ever-encroaching police power of the state. It may also serve as a fitting reminder to all ministers of justice in our society that they did not author justice, and will one day be responsible for the way in which they have administered it themselves."

■"First and foremost, we are women of faith and principle whose Christianity is founded, not on human invention, but on divinely revealed truth." That is the promising beginning to *A Christian Women's Declaration and Study Guide*, published jointly by the Ecumenical Coalition on Women and Society, the Renew Network, and the Institute on Religion and Democracy. Prefaced by the text of the Christian Women's Declaration itself, the booklet provides a six-session study, examining the challenges faced by American Christian women through the lens of biblical and doctrinal faithfulness. To purchase, call

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(202) 986-1440 or (706) 778-4812 ($6 for individual copies.)

■This year in Boca Raton, the twenty young scholars pursuing a Ph.D. in the new Public Intellectuals Program at Florida Atlantic University will be breathing a little easier than their doctoral colleagues elsewhere when they think about their futures. A Ph.D. in being a public intellectual? It may not be as goofy as it sounds, reports Tom Scocca in *Lingua Franca*. "The goal of the program is not to accredit a new generation of George Will-style pundits; rather . . . it aims to train intellectually oriented people to go out into public life." Sounds good, if a little fuzzy. "But beyond elevated notions of service and progress," Scocca continues, "there is another good reason for sending Ph.D.'s out into public life: It may help get rid of them. With academic prospects in the humanities resembling dinner prospects during the great potato famine, even some skeptics are willing to give Florida Atlantic's plans the benefit of the doubt. At best, FAU might draw doctoral candidates away from glutted disciplinary programs elsewhere; even if it doesn't, it could provide other schools with a blueprint for workfare for budding scholars. Pointing Ph.D.'s toward the larger world may or may not help the world, but at least it will give them somewhere to go." It has long been said that a celebrity is someone who is well known for being well known. Now an intellectual is someone with a degree that says he is an intellectual. As for its public purchase, if I understand the FAU program, it is training more for a hobby than for an occupation. That is more private than public, which may be the best way to be an intellectual.

■Readers in the market for the latest kinks in gay autobiography or what we are told is the definitive account of the U.S. government's oppression of Chicanos might take note of this catalog from the University of Wisconsin Press. In an academic world where almost nothing surprises, the catalog is noteworthy for its pages upon pages of books without even one that a reasonable person might call a scholarly contribution to a subject of general interest. There is, for instance, *Of Men and Monsters: Jeffrey Dahmer and the Construction of the Serial Killer*. Dahmer, it may be remembered, was "into" having sex with young men whom he then killed and had for dinner. In a blurb for the book, Chris Bull of the *Washington Post* says it "takes aim at the unsettling disparity of attention between murderer and murdered." Maybe so, although it might be suggested that Dahmer's behavior was somewhat more out of the way than that of his victims. We are further told that "Jeffrey Dahmer is not a page in the history of true crime but a Monster who serves many rhetorical and cultural functions." He tried to do his bit.

■A new report coauthored by David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead of the National Marriage Project notes a significant increase in the practice and public acceptance of cohabitation since the 1960s. "Today, more than four million unmarried couples in America live together, versus less than half a million in 1960. More than half of all first marriages are now preceded by cohabitation, and a national survey of high school seniors found nearly 60 percent felt that it was a good idea to live together before marriage to 'find out whether they really get along.'" But does cohabitation really work to a couple's advantage? This study found that, contrary to common opinion (but not, perhaps, to common sense), living together before marriage 1) increases the risk of divorce after marriage, 2) increases the risk of domestic violence for women and physical and sexual abuse for children, and 3) leads to lower levels of happiness and well-being than can be found among couples who did not cohabit. Because young people who have grown up in the midst of divorce want to avoid it themselves, their first instinct is not to marry at all. The irony is that living together before marriage leads to the very sorts of problems that result, in the long run, in divorce—the very outcome it was supposed to help couples avoid. For a copy of the Popenoe/Whitehead report, contact the National Marriage Project at (732) 932-2722, or email marriage@rci.rutgers.edu.

■One can hardly avoid seeing the WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) bracelets that sell for $9.95. The WWJD entrepreneurs have now expanded to a board game, youth leader's kit, WWJD-CD with the top fifteen Christian Contemporary Music (CCM) artists, and much else. The Presbyterian rigorists who edit the oft-mentioned (here) *Nicotine Theological Journal* have had enough: "The one hopeful outcome in this latest example of evangelical profanity (after all, the Third Commandment requires the holy and reverent, not commercial, use of God's name, title, attributes, ordinances, word, and works), is the recent word of how teens in Southern California have adapted the WWJD slogan for their own ends. Instead of using the bracelet to show that they are loyal followers of Christ, some adolescents have changed WWJD from a question into the assertion, 'We Want Jack Daniels.' Don't get us wrong. Our delight in this practice does not mean that we endorse teenage drinking apart from parental supervision. The

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encouragement we derive from this news only extends to the humorous irony of using evangelical kitsch for something as anti-evangelical as drinking Tennessee sour mash whiskey. It also confirms our suspicion that evangelicals hardly ever understand the dynamics of the market—it giveth large numbers, but it also taketh away larger truths."

■The link between abortion and breast cancer is one that most abortionists don't like to discuss in public. But now they may have to. In a recent publication of the *Wisconsin Law Review*, law student John Kindley demonstrates that the medical evidence of the link is strong enough now to create some sticky legal problems for those reticent abortionists. Kindley writes, "The purpose of this comment is to show that the current level of scientific evidence linking induced abortion with increased breast cancer risk is sufficient to support an ethical and legal duty to disclose fully the risk to women who are considering pregnancy termination." For a copy of the article, write to Clarke D. Forsythe, Esq., Americans United for Life, 310 S. Peoria Street, Suite 300, Chicago, Illinois 60607-3534.

■In both the ditzy and malicious departments, Maureen Dowd of the *Times* is proving herself a worthy successor to Anna Quindlen. (The latter, incidentally, has replaced the more serious Meg Greenfield as regular columnist for *Newsweek*.) During the impeachment squalor, Dowd earned the top Bottom Feeder Award with a column alleging that Kenneth Starr—who, she noted, sings hymns while jogging and "still reads the Bible"—gathered details on Ms. Lewinsky's servicing of the President for reasons of his own sexual titillation. Now in "The God Squad" she goes after politicians, led by Congressman Tom DeLay ("the Torquemada from Texas"), who say religion should not be excluded from the classroom. "Faith is an intensely personal matter," writes Dowd. "It should not be treated as a credential or reduced to a sound bite. History teaches that when religion is injected into politics—the Crusades, Henry VIII, Salem, Father Coughlin, Hitler, Kosovo—disaster follows." That sound bite on what history teaches raises questions about who taught her history. The inclusion of Hitler is a nice touch, and one might have thought that—if one must use such simplistic formulas—with Henry VIII, who declared himself the supreme head of the Church, it was more a matter of injecting politics into religion. "Politicians," she writes, "are rushing to take God's name in vain (thereby violating commandment No. 3)." Without making too much of it, one notes the curiosity that Ms. Dowd, a Catholic, employs the Protestant numbering of the commandments. On much more serious scores, she appears to be unhinged from both her faith and the protocols of decency as, aided by blithe ignorance, she vies for the title of nastiest pundit in today's prestige media. (One may be sure that Frank Rich will not give it up without a fierce snit.) It is very sad, for Ms. Dowd is manifestly not without a certain talent.

■Little slips by gimlet-eyed Father Robert F. Drinan of Georgetown University Law Center. It has come to his attention that Thomas Monaghan of Domino's Pizza fame is launching a new law school called Ave Maria. Monaghan sent out press releases to announce the fact. Writing for the *National Catholic Reporter* in the highest tradition of investigative reporting, Fr. Drinan says: "I spoke also with Monaghan's top aide. He was sanguine but not willing to expand on the objectives of the school beyond the flattering press release. When I suggested that the announcement hinted at criticism of existing Catholic schools, he backed away without disputing my assertion." Note that the press release was "flattering." Sinister fellow that he is, Monaghan is clearly trying to put a positive spin on this new venture. But of particular interest is the way in which the "top aide" backed away from Drinan's suggestion that turns out to be an assertion. Clearly, the fellow is trying to hide something, but the relentless Fr. Drinan is not going to let him get away with it. The new school will, he writes, "be self-righteous." "It will mock other law schools as too secularized and, in essence, unfaithful to the Magisterium." He continues: "At the risk of rising to the bait in a premature way, let me talk about Catholicism at Georgetown University Law Center." He could have waited to rise to the bait, but that's not Fr. Drinan's way. Georgetown, he notes, has Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish chaplaincies and "has three full-time Jesuit lawyers on its faculty." You can hardly get more Catholic than that. Yet there is more: there is "a beautiful chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is preserved." "Preserved" from where or when Fr. Drinan does not say. "It would be nice," he observes, "if Catholic legal educators could welcome Ave Maria to their ranks. That will not happen." He will help to make sure that doesn't happen. He notes the new school will have to get accreditation, and adds, "It will not be easy." If it sounds like he is being excessively prejudgmental, it is only because he knows what is going to happen. "Ave Maria will be a 'holier than thou' institution that will deride the competition and seek to buy talent with money from its billionaire patron." Fr. Drinan does not distract the reader from his point by mentioning that the $50 million Mr.

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Monaghan put up is but a pittance compared with the funds available to, for instance, Georgetown. Tough though he is, Fr. Drinan allows that there may be another side to the story: "On the other hand, perhaps we can hope that the Ave Maria School of Law will be a reminder to all persons engaged in Catholic higher education that a heavier emphasis on religious values can always be useful." It is not very likely, but perhaps we can hope that. Anyway, religious values can always be useful. For something. That may seem like a somewhat limp admission, but it is in fact a trumpet-blast of daringly undaunted Catholic fidelity when it comes from one who is a champion of higher education in, as they say, "the Jesuit tradition."

■Ready or not, there is this new word: *webzine.* A webzine is something like a magazine, except, not surprisingly, it only appears in digital form on the World Wide Web, not on paper. A fine example of this new phenomenon is *Boundless Webzine,* a publication of Focus on the Family dedicated to illuminating the boundless possibilities for Christian college students. Its weekly articles cover everything from pop culture and relationships to the theological and philosophical underpinnings of the faith, featuring such notable writers as FT's J. Budziszewski and Sarah E. Hinlicky. To see the webzine, visit the site at www.boundless.org.

■Reviewing two new books on the Balkans in the *Times Literary Supplement,* Professor Charles King of Georgetown University arrives at a grim conclusion: "Despite the rhetoric from Washington, Yugoslavia is not, or at least was not, a totalitarian state. The massive street demonstrations in the winter of 1996-7, organized by the opposition Zajedno coalition, were an impressive call for genuine democracy, but they failed as much because of the lukewarm response from the West as because of infighting among the coalition's constituents. It is not only immoral but also simply wrong to think of the struggling pro-democracy groups in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Podgorica, and elsewhere as stooges of the Milosevic regime or, as recent editorials in the United States have suggested, Serb versions of Hitler's willing executioners. After being ignored by the international community, bullied by Milosevic, and now bombed by NATO, it is a wonder that the forces of democratic change in Yugoslavia have managed to survive at all. Milosevic's Yugoslavia is now closer than ever to becoming in reality the kleptocratic dictatorship that American observers long assumed it was. The problem with writing poetry, Dr. Johnson said, is to know when you have done it well. The same could be said of the West's interventions in the former Yugoslavia. For nearly a decade now, the outcomes of international policy in the region have consistently been at odds with the professed goals of involvement. By ignoring the complexities of internal politics in both Bosnia and Serbia, Western governments continue to craft policies, both wildly ill-informed and, increasingly, profoundly perverse—partitioning Bosnia in order to preserve it, destroying the Yugoslav economy in order to build democracy, and now, killing Albanians in order to save them."

■I was teaching in Krakow, Poland, at the time, but CNN and BBC immediately went into nonstop low treacly mode about a nation in mourning, and on and on. When I got back I learned that it had been even worse than I thought, with the media emetic applied full force to produce an American version of Britain's emotional breakdown over Princess Di. "He was our closest equivalent to Princess Diana, a comparison that his sudden loss will now make inescapable," wrote Kenneth Auchincloss in *Newsweek.* It was hardly inescapable; just irresistible to unimaginative journalists who have been ideologically milking the Kennedy myth for decades. Now, said *Today's* cohost Katie Couric, "Caroline remains our only link to those golden years." Perhaps the headline over the eight-page cover story in *Time* wins the mawkishness prize: "He Was America's Prince. An Icon of Both Magic and Grief Who Flew His Own Course to the Lost Horizon." Then there were the endless sobshots of people laying flowers at the New York apartment, turning it into what looked much like a Hindu-American shrine to celebrityhood. "I felt like he was a brother to me," said one devotee after another. Don't these people have brothers? Don't they have a life of their own? My apologies if I sound curmudgeonly, but there's something deeply wrong here. Only once did I really meet John F. Kennedy, Jr. That was over a lunch at the Century Club arranged by a mutual friend. We talked at great length about politics, culture, publishing, and what it means to be a Catholic Christian, among other things. Everybody remarked his striking good looks, and there was that, but I was greatly impressed by his gentleness, and by the grace with which he was trying to understand his part in an extraordinarily complex mix of family history and public expectations. I liked him very much. As E. J. Dionne of the *Washington Post* sensibly observed, part of the sadness of his death is that he did not live long enough to demonstrate that he was more than an object to be exploited by political partisans and the celebrity-mongering media. He was not, and I do not think he wanted to be, "America's Prince." He was a personable and moderately gifted

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young man caught in a life circumstance where it was hard to tell the difference between advantage and burden. The appropriate response is to pray for the families in their loss, and to let John F. Kennedy, Jr. go, in the hope that he is now where he need not prove to anyone who he is.

■The Houston *Catholic Worker* runs pages of letters of the keep-up-the-good-work kind. Or, as a priest from Connecticut puts it, "Thanks for all your wonderful work and BEING!" The editors seem wondrously unembarrassed in amplifying the singing of their praises. I really liked the letter from a reader who says, "I had never heard of Michael Novak before I read your article. His ideas show what could happen to gospel truths when they are used to serve the interests of large multinational corporations." Thus is the reader spared the trouble of reading Michael Novak. Who, by the way, writes a most irenic letter to the editors, pleading with them to consider whether they have been entirely fair to his arguments. To which the editors respond — in a spirit most unlike that of Dorothy Day whom they routinely invoke: "We pray that we might find something in common with you besides loathing communism. We are still searching." How about Christ? The Church? An interest in truthful discourse? No, scratch the last one.

■In the August/September issue I said that the American Psychiatric Association (APA) had removed pedophilia from its official list of disorders. A number of readers have noted that that is not quite accurate. Pedophilia has not been removed but redefined. It is now only a disorder if the pedophile is distressed by his condition or disabled in his work or social relationships. It is not a disorder in the case of the "psychologically normal" (even if immoral and criminal) child molester. It is possible that some readers may be reassured by this correction. (A short article, "The Problem of Pedophilia," is a fine overview of this question and is available from the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, 16633 Ventura Blvd., Suite 1340, Encino, California 91436, or their website, www.narth.com.)

■The bill may eventually make it out of committee and get passed, but already the Defense of Marriage Act—condemned by opponents as maliciously "homophobic"—has sent shock waves through Massachusetts where it is supported by a remarkably broad array of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim leaders, including the black ministerial alliance, brought together by Matt Daniels of the Massachusetts Family Institute. Writing in the *Weekly Standard*, David Orgon Coolidge comments on the testimony of Jan Platner, head of the state ACLU, at committee hearings: "'The Defense of Marriage Act,' Platner asserted, is an 'inappropriate, ill-advised, and gratuitous' invasion of that 'most sacred space where we exercise our choice of partner and family.' This seemed a slightly odd claim, since marriage is a public status, not a private act. And I was struck by the term 'sacred space.' It was then that I began to catch on. What we do with our bodies—this is the 'sacred space' to which she referred. In this sacred space, not only must we be allowed to act privately, but our private choices must be publicly affirmed. Otherwise, what we do in private is *merely* private—and thereby 'marginalized' or 'stigmatized.' Our sacred choices *must* receive public endorsement. Liberty becomes the right to do whatever one wants with one's body. Equality becomes the imperative to treat all sacred choices as equally valuable."

■Of course columnists tend to be partisan. Nothing wrong with that. But most keep at least a loose leash on the propensity for fawning. Not David Nyhan of the *Boston Globe*, who used the occasion of the death of John F. Kennedy, Jr. for an effusion on "Ted Kennedy's Big Shoulders." After supporting the family through another ordeal, we are told, the Senator will "be back at the same old stand. Put it all together, and that's how Teddy copes: faith, family, and fighting the good fight for the underdog." A different canine metaphor is evoked by Mr. Nyhan's adulation. Of particular interest is this: "Frequent Mass, personal relationships with forward-looking clerics, constant alignment of political goals with religious teaching, all these anchor Teddy firmly in the safe harbor first constructed for the little boy by Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, a Catholic to the core." "Frequent" does not quite catch the Mass obligation freely assumed by Catholics. "Forward-looking clerics," being translated, means clerics looking back to the "revolution of Vatican II" that was not to be. And as for the Senator's politics being aligned with "religious teaching," perhaps so, if Mr. Nyhan has in mind some religion other than Catholicism. The Massachusetts congressional delegation, led by Senator Kennedy, has ten Catholics, eight of whom are consistent supporters of the unlimited abortion license. In implementing the 1998 statement of the U.S. bishops, "Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics," the bishops of Massachusetts have an unenviable task. With persistence and courage enough, perhaps one day the unborn child will in the politics of Massachusetts be elevated to the status of underdog.

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■"From the Hunter's Net" is a remarkable fifty-six-page Jewish-Christian dialogue on partial-birth abortion between Dr. Mary Nicholas and novelist and playwright Sandi Merle. The answer to the question of whether anything new can be said on this subject and its necessary connection with the larger issue of the *Roe v. Wade* abortion license is definitely yes. $5 ($3 each for ten or more), postage and handling included, from the Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life, 215 Lexington Avenue, Fourth Floor, New York, New York 10016.

■Peter Steinfels, whose journalism typically brings a touch of distinction to an undistinguished profession, writes about the recent meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America at which Father Avery Dulles, no stranger to our readers, engaged in an exchange with Fr. Richard McCormick, a sometime dissenter, on what is meant by the development of doctrine. The touch of distinction is diminished, unfortunately, by the cheap shot that "Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the Vatican's custodian of doctrinal orthodoxy, has practically declared war on the Church's theologians for some years now." Really? Ratzinger, a distinguished theologian in his own right, is prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, whose job it is to assure that what is advertised as Catholic teaching is in fact Catholic teaching. In the almost twenty years that he has been prefect, the number of theologians who have been even mildly censured can be counted on one's fingers. This in a church of more than a billion members with tens of thousands of theologians publishing as many books and articles every year. Some war. Steinfels asks, "But what does it mean for a church when high officials perceive those trained to explicate the faith as, in fact, prime threats to it?" And he answers his own question, "It is rather like an airline that accuses its pilots of deliberately trying to crash the planes." One might venture the response that what it means for a church to be concerned about heresy is that it is a church concerned about orthodoxy. As for the pilot metaphor, what should an airline do when a good many of its pilots publicly announce their intention to crash the plane, as a good many theologians publicly announce their opposition to aspects of the faith as authoritatively taught by the Church? But of course pilots and airplanes are the wrong metaphor. The more venerable metaphor, although it may rub against current sensibilities, is that of the flock and the shepherd. The shepherds, who are sacramentally charged and graced to "explicate the faith," are the bishops in communion with the Bishop of Rome. Theologians are "trained" to assist the bishops in that task. To be sure, faithful theologians may sometimes offer assistance that is not welcome, when, for instance, they engage in scholarly exploration of questions that some bishops would prefer not to think about. A great deal of patience and forbearance is required all around. But when, as in Mr. Steinfels' depiction, academic training and expertise are separated from sacramental order and charism, when bishops are reduced to the role of company management with academic theologians in the pilot's seat, something very important in our understanding of church and theology has already crashed.

■Monique Dostie, a Catholic, runs the Jaricot Foster Home for mentally retarded adults in Lewiston, Maine. The state Department of Human Services is revoking her license because she does not allow pornography or sexual activity in the home. The guardians of the three residents chose the home because they agree with the policy. The residents have not asked for sex or pornography. According to what it says here, a representative of an association of group homes who supports revoking her license explains that Ms. Dostie's policy "could lead to an increase in deviant behavior as her residents seek ways to increase gratification." If I understand the argument, it is necessary to allow pornography and fornication in order to discourage pornography and fornication. Now that is deviant.

■In November the National Council of Churches observes its fiftieth anniversary in Cleveland where it held its founding convention. The event is called a celebration but it is as muted and ambiguous a celebration as that of NATO's fiftieth in the midst of its deadly miscalculation in Yugoslavia. Since the late seventies, the NCC has fallen on very hard times. For one thing, it has long since ceased to be ecumenical, the purpose for which it was established, since it became an institutionalized enclave for hard-shell Protestant liberalism. That is no doubt a consequence of its enfeebled affirmation of the core truths that constitute gospel and Church. That enfeeblement is evident in the priorities of the Cleveland meeting. In the program, fifteen forums are devoted to "sustaining the environment," "transforming our society," and "shaping our culture," while only one (theology and ecumenism) is listed under "equipping the saints." Justice for women, racism, inclusiveness, and what is called "the crisis in health care" compose an agenda that some might find hard to distinguish from that of a left-wing caucus of the Democratic Party. I was struck also by a forum on "Ending Poverty as We Know It at Home and Around the World." One finds less than compelling the prospect of poverty as we have not known it. At Cleveland former UN

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ambassador, former Congressman, former mayor of Atlanta Andrew Young will be installed as NCC president. Desmond Tutu, former Anglican archbishop of Capetown, and Louis Stokes, former Ohio Congressman, will speak. The former NCC of, say, forty years ago was not so very former. Heading the list of "distinguished guests," however, is Marian Wright Edelman, who is presently the president of the Children's Defense Fund. While the program includes a time slot for "denominational dinners," notably absent from the announced program are denominational leaders. That may reflect the continuing disengagement of oldline churches from the NCC or simply that today, unlike 1950, there is a name-recognition problem with their leaders. While the ecumenical gathering excludes evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics are not entirely neglected. It says here that Mr. Young will be installed at the Catholic cathedral. That will be followed by a "festive banquet" with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who is anything but former, as the featured speaker. It does not say whether he will address the theme of the Cleveland meeting, "Unity in Christ: Gift and Calling." The announcement points out that the Cleveland gathering is "coinciding with a global millennial moment." With respect to the great challenge of Christian mission and unity in the next millennium, one might observe that it is very coincidental. Nonetheless, one wishes the NCC the best, or at least better than the NCC as we know it.

■Since the fourth century, the Holy See (commonly, if somewhat inaccurately, called the Vatican) has had formal diplomatic relations with many nations. Today it is a Permanent Observer in the United Nations, a status it shares with Switzerland. This means it can participate and vote in international conferences and can participate, but not vote, in the General Assembly. In April, Catholics for a Free Choice, a letterhead organization funded by Ford and other foundations to oppose the Catholic Church on population questions, initiated an appeal to Kofi Annan, UN secretary general, to rescind the status of the Holy See. The British Broadcasting Corporation is supporting the campaign by asking its listeners to respond to the question, "Do you think the Vatican should be ousted for voicing its religious views on contraception?" Much of the response, sometimes fiercely anti-Catholic in tone, has been in the affirmative. There is little chance that the campaign will succeed, since 170 member states of the UN have diplomatic relations with the Holy See, which means they recognize it as a state entitled to its place in the UN. The obvious purpose of Catholics for a Free Choice and its allies such as Planned Parenthood is to intimidate the Holy See into muting its vigorous opposition to abortion and coercive population control. Which is an indication of how much they know about the Holy See.

■In response to a questioning reader, no, we do not intend to run an extended response to an article in the *New Republic* by one Michael Sean Winters, who is identified as a person who has committed other articles in the *New Republic*. The article is a five-page attack on neoconservatives in the guise of a review of David Schindler's *Heart of the World, Center of the Church*, which book is, in turn, an attack on neoconservatives in the name of the great Hans Urs von Balthasar. "Richard John Neuhaus, Michael Novak, and George Weigel are probably the three best-known Catholic intellectuals in America," writes Mr. Winters, and they are dangerous because "the disposition to unite [Throne and Altar] burns with Metternich-like ferocity in the neoconservative breast." He allows that "the throne of their desire happens to be a democratic polity and a capitalist economy; but theologically speaking, a state is a state, a throne is a throne, worldly power is worldly power." Monarchy or republic, despotism or freedom, what's the difference? According to Winters, the neocons believe that all the theological questions have been settled "and the only challenge that remains is the challenge of politics." Never mind that the first sentence in the editorial launching the premier issue of this journal forcefully rejects such a view, asserting that the first thing to be said about religion and public life is that public life is not the first thing. Few themes in these pages have been so sustained and emphatically asserted over the years as the relativizing of politics. Apparently you don't have to attend to what authors say when you know what burns in their breast. As for Professor Schindler's book, Winters says it is "the most important Catholic text to be published in the United States for some time." And it is that because it "introduces Balthasar to an American audience." Balthasar in this reading is everything the neoconservatives are not. Again, never mind the appreciative treatment of Balthasar in these pages. Apart from its "introducing" Balthasar, however, Mr. Winters, it turns out, does not think much of the Schindler book. It is hard to read, suffers from an "inalertness to history," and perpetuates a "crude and hoary" concept of the masculinity of men with which Mr. Winters expresses strong disagreement. (For Balthasar, Winters says, Christianity is not a moral code but "a stupendous claim about the supernatural." He does not say why one should exclude the other, and in fact Balthasar wrote extensively on the moral life as the way of Christ.)

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There is perverse amusement in Mr. Winters' cockeyed eccentricity, but his very long essay finally disserves almost every subject it touches. David Schindler's arguments are deserving of more serious treatment. It is hardly accurate, however, to say that his recent book "introduces Balthasar to an American audience." That tribute might fit Edward Oakes' justly acclaimed 1994 introduction to Balthasar, *Pattern of Redemption*, but the truth is that a number of publishers, chiefly Ignatius Press, have been bringing out Balthasar volumes by the dozens for many years, and his influence is now comparable to that of John Paul II among those who have sensed the possibility of what one neoconservative author has called "the Catholic moment." But enough, or else this will turn into that extended response I said we would not run. One is only left to wonder why Leon Wieseltier, Literary Editor of *TNR*, served his readers this farrago of nonsense and misinformation laced with ad hominem nastiness. There is no reason why Mr. Wieseltier, too, should be seeking attention by attacking the neoconservatives. They are, after all, not *that* well known.

■A new document from the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) bears the title "The Gift of Authority." The persuasively developed argument that authority in the Church should be viewed not as a problem but as a gift is itself a welcome gift. Catholic commentators, including Father Avery Dulles, have pointed out that, while the document goes a long way, it does not bite the bullet on papal authority, papal jurisdiction, and the ways in which teaching is acknowledged as authoritative (the question of the Magisterium). Some Anglicans, including Episcopalians in this country, share the view of Stephen Hampton, chaplain of Exeter College, Oxford, who claims the document is "proposing the wholesale abandoning of the Reformation." He writes, "'The Gift of Authority' is incompatible with the mind of most evangelical Anglicans today. It shows an almost complete neglect of Anglicanism's Protestant inheritance. It has serious consequences for Anglican relations with other Protestant denominations, at a time when ecumenism in that direction seems to have borne more fruit." I believe "The Gift of Authority" is a theologically careful and spiritually rich statement that builds on the best work of the ecumenical movement, such as Faith and Order's 1982 document, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*. In ecumenical dialogues, however, there is frequently a disconnect between the theologians in conversation and the doctrinal situation that prevails in the communions that they represent. Nonetheless, one cannot help but believe that statements such as "The Gift of Authority," manifesting such intelligence, care, and devotion to the fullness of Christian truth, will one day, in ways we cannot now foresee, contribute to the reconciliation that Christ wills for his entire Church.

■The cover-up of government responsibility for the Waco killings in 1993 is rapidly unraveling, which makes this a good time to reread the groundbreaking article by the late Dean Kelley, "Waco: A Massacre and Its Aftermath," in the May 1995 issue. Many at the time declared it the best account of those tragic events, and that judgment is now being vindicated with historical vengeance. The entire issue is available for $4.50 from FT Reader Services, 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, Illinois 61108, or may be accessed on the First Things website at www.firstthings.com.

■Hardly an issue goes by without one or more complaints that I failed to mention where a quoted item first appeared. That is why there is a "Sources" box at the end of this section.

■Now here's something you don't run across every day: the Atheist and Agnostic Pro-Life League. Founder Matt Wallace calls himself a Secular Humanist and a "Compleat Heretic," but nonetheless has the good sense to be opposed to "the life-denying horror of abortion." His reason? "Because life is all there is and all that matters, and abortion destroys the life of an innocent human being." He hopes other nontheists will see the light of, well, whatever, and invites those who fit the following requirements to join the League: 1) being an avowed atheist, agnostic, or other nontheist, 2) opposing abortion and desiring its abolition, with or without exceptions, and 3) supporting nonviolence as the sole legitimate means of achieving the goals of the pro-life movement. So far, he has eight members, including himself.

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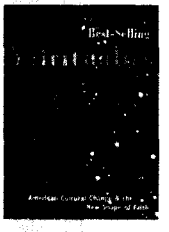

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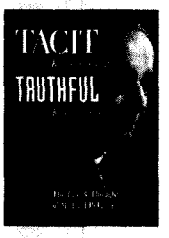

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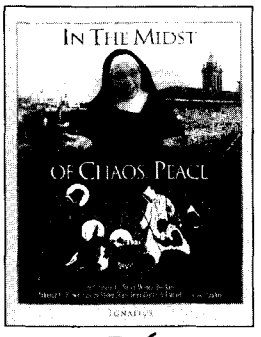

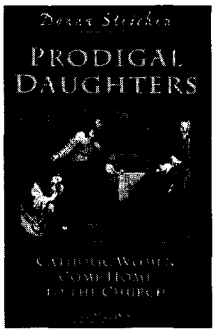

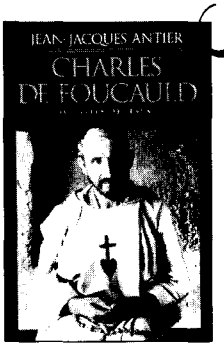

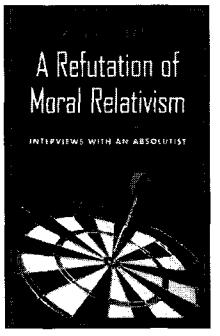

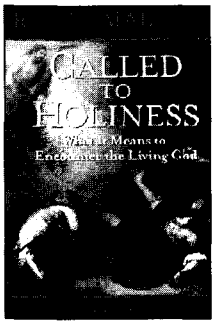

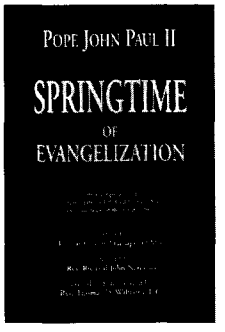

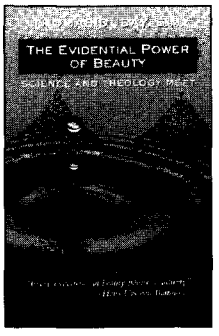

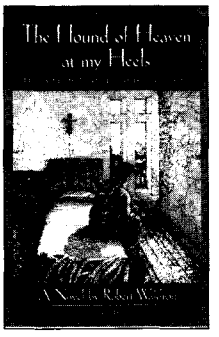

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